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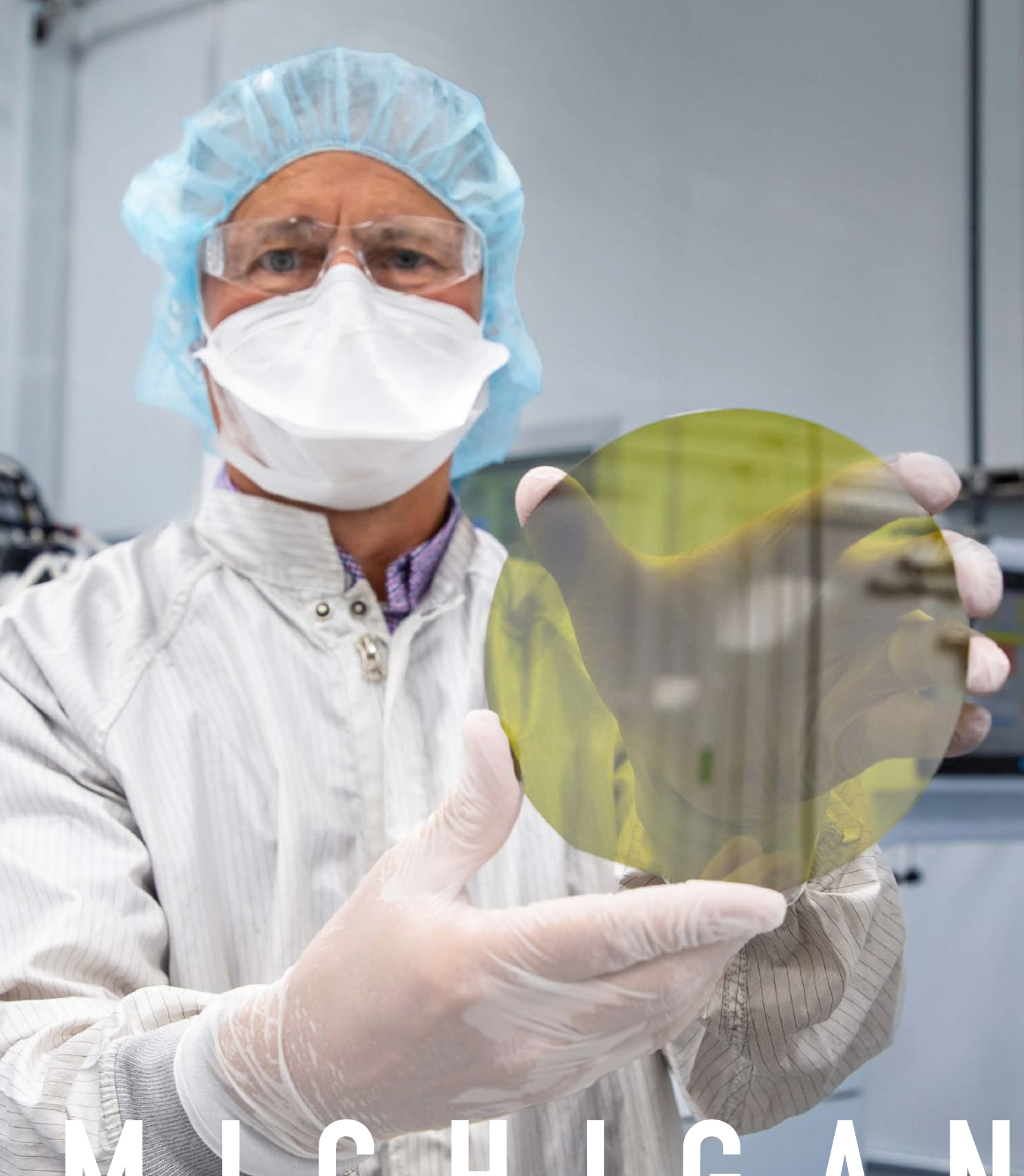


THE FUTURE IS HERE AND NOW

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It's All Connected, With Tech

It's been 25 years since the "Y2K bug" had the world in fearful anticipation as to whether or not computers across the globe would adapt to a four-digit year format when January 1, 2000 arrived. The worry stemmed from the potential clash of the four-digit 2000 format compared to the two-digit year format utilized by early coders (99, rather than 1999). Would computers revert to 00, and interpret the year as 1900?

As the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History states: "The fear was that when clocks struck midnight on January 1, 2000, affected computer systems, unsure of the year, would fail to operate and cause massive power outages, transportation systems to shut down, and banks to close." The prevalence of technology in society in 1999 was broader than ever before.

In 2024, the tech landscape is vastly different, while there remain familiar themes of opportunity, exploration, and risk.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is enabling a steady stream of positive developments, while potential users across all industries are exploring how they might benefit from the technology. Meanwhile, cybersecurity remains a significant concern, and companies are seeking resources to fortify their systems, processes, and overall business. The articles on AI and cybersecurity in this issue (pages 16 and 24) highlight areas focused on these types of discoveries. Meanwhile, the Top Innovation Hubs article (page 88) showcases a variety of locations that foster discovery across both the public and private sectors.

Business Facilities will continue to explore locations that are making moves in the realms of AI, cybersecurity, and beyond. Send me note about what your company or community is exploring in this space.

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NEW & NOTEWORTHY

INTEL MANUFACTURING APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE WORKS

Intel has launched its first U.S. registered apprenticeship program for manufacturing facility technicians in Arizona in collaboration with the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA), the Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Board, the SEMI Foundation, Maricopa Community Colleges District (MCCD), and Fresh Start Women's Foundation. The company plans to train facility technician apprentices over the next five years. Selected apprentices will be full-time Intel employees after completion and will earn a certificate and college credit upon completion of the one-year program.

This is one of several commitments Intel has made to workforce development, investing more than \$250 million in academic collaborations over the past five years. Intel partners with community colleges and nonprofits in Arizona and Oregon through a two-week Quick Start pilot program and in New Mexico with a one- or two-term Mechatronics certificate



Intel has launched programs for manufacturing facility technicians.

program. All of the programs aim to support the semiconductor industry's growing employment needs and spark interest in new career pathways among under-resourced communities.

In Ohio, Intel is working with the Ohio Association of Community Colleges' Semiconductor Collaboration network to launch programs and career pathways that aim to meet the demands of the semiconductor sector, foster economic development and provide accessible education across the state. ♦

CARMAX PARK NEW HOME OF RICHMOND FLYING SQUIRRELS

The Richmond Flying Squirrels, a minor league baseball team in the Richmond, VA, has signed an agreement with the Richmond Economic Development Authority and CarMax to construct a new stadium with a 30-year lease. The new stadium will be named CarMax Park; this multi-year exclusive naming rights for the new stadium expands on the partnership between the Flying Squirrels and CarMax that began in 2016.

"Richmond will finally be getting the ballpark it truly deserves, and we could not be more relieved and gratified," said Flying Squirrels President Lou DiBella. "The people of Richmond have proven their

loyalty to the Squirrels repeatedly, with fans packing our antiquated Diamond every night. It's thrilling to know that the Flying Squirrels and MiLB will continue to entertain Richmond for decades to come."

Bill Nash, CarMax CEO, said "This is an exciting time for Richmond, and CarMax's naming rights partnership reflects our commitment to our city, its people, and its growth. CarMax Park will bring the community together through unforgettable experiences. We're thrilled to take this next step with the Squirrels, continuing to build on our history of community engagement, innovation, and progress for our hometown." ♦

TREX TOPS OUT THIRD U.S. MANUFACTURING PLANT IN ARKANSAS

In Little Rock, AR, Trex topped out the flagship building at its manufacturing facility in August. The world's largest manufacturer of high-performance, low-maintenance, eco-friendly composite decking and railing announced the \$400 million investment in October 2021.

Set on nearly 300 acres in the Port of Little Rock, the site is Trex's third U.S.-based manufacturing location, joining Fernley, NV, and Winchester, VA, where the company is based. When complete, the Little Rock campus will include buildings dedicated to decking production, plastic recycling, warehousing and administrative offices.

"We are thrilled to reach this important milestone in the development of our new facility," said Bryan H. Fairbanks, President and CEO of Trex Company. "... This new campus will enable us to provide our customers with significantly better access to Trex products while strengthening our position for future growth." ♦

The new ballpark will be located adjacent to The Diamond where the Squirrels currently play. ♦



CarMax Park in Richmond, VA is slated to open in 2026.

PHOTOS: (TOP) INTEL CORPORATION, (LEFT) RICHMOND EDA

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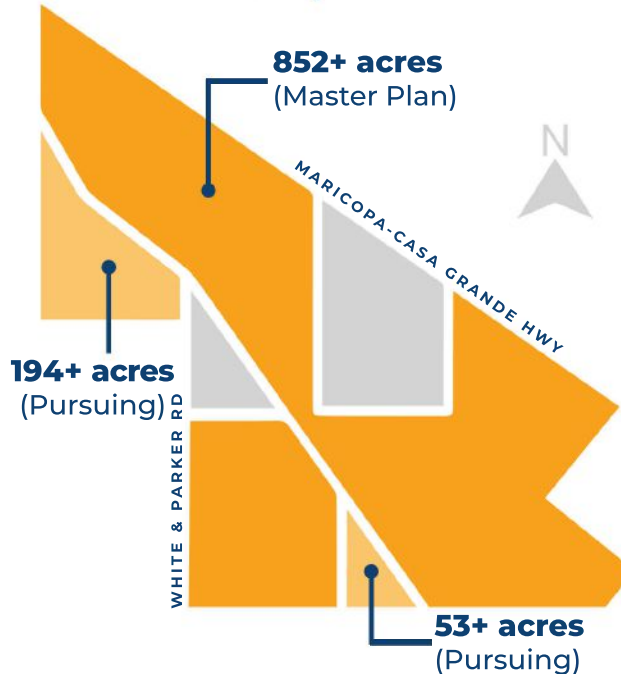
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UL SOLUTIONS ADVANCED BATTERY LAB IN MICHIGAN

In August, UL Solutions Inc. opened its North America Advanced Battery Laboratory in Auburn Hills, MI, an extensive electric and hybrid vehicle and industrial battery testing laboratory. The new facility is UL Solutions' largest laboratory investment in its history and is located in the Auburn Hills Oakland Technology Park complex near Detroit.

"The electrification of everything relies on battery innovation, impacts many industries and elevates the need for safety and performance across the energy transition spectrum," said Jennifer Scanlon, President and CEO of UL Solutions. "This is where we step in. Our North America Advanced Battery Laboratory demonstrates our commitment to supporting the safer commercialization of new battery innovations that play a vital role in the world's energy transition."

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer said, "With this cutting-edge testing facility in Auburn Hills, we can test the technology we will need for electric vehicles close by to the manufacturing plants where the batteries, cars, and



Ribbon-cutting at UL Solutions advanced battery lab in Michigan.

trucks themselves are getting built by hardworking Michiganders."

Experts from UL Solutions staff the North America Advanced Battery Laboratory, performing a wide variety of safety and performance tests. The facility's portfolio of tests is one of the most extensive in the industry, including thermal fire propagation, electrical, mechanical abuse, and environmental testing based on various UL and International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standards, United Nations (UN) goals and initiatives, and Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) and OEM specifications. ♦

IN FORT WORTH, TX, DICK'S SPORTING GOODS EXPANDS

DICK'S Sporting Goods is building an 800,000-square-foot regional distribution center in Fort Worth, TX, which is expected to bring 300 full-time jobs to the region over the next 10 years.

The facility will support the company's business in Texas and provide distribution capabilities to more than 100 stores across several states. DICK'S chose Fort Worth for its business-friendly environment, qualified and reliable workforce, and proximity to its physical footprint across Texas. The Fort Worth location joins a distribution network that includes facilities in Georgia, New York, Arizona, Indiana, and Pennsylvania.

"We're thrilled to announce our plans to build and open a distribution center in Fort Worth," said Sean Whitehouse, DICK'S Senior Vice President of Supply Chain. "This facility will support the rapid growth of our business, including in the state of Texas, and enable more efficient and effective flow of product to athletes whether they shop in-store or online. We're also excited to play an active role in the Fort Worth community."

The distribution center will be located on an 89.5-acre site within the Risinger/35 Logistics Park, a development by Hillwood. Hillwood, the developer of AllianceTexas, and Hillwood Construction Services, will

develop and construct this new build-to-suit project.

Construction on the facility is scheduled to begin this fall and expected to open in early 2026. ♦



The distribution center in Fort Worth, TX will serve the company's network of stores.

PPE MAKER RADIANS EXPANDS ITS MEMPHIS, TN CAMPUS

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) manufacturer, Radians, expanded its Memphis, TN corporate campus with a 110,000-square-foot addition. The new facility comprises air-conditioned manufacturing, warehouse, and office space, and it will combine Radians' manufacturing with custom imprinting operations under one roof.

"This headquarters expansion is Radians' largest in the last 10 years. It reaffirms our long-term dedication to the Memphis community and the reshoring of USA based manufacturing," said CEO Mike Tutor.

The expansion marks a significant milestone in the company's growth strategy. Moving all operations into one facility aims to enhance operational efficiency, improve production capacity, and support the demand for PPE.

An ISO 9001:2008 certified leader in the PPE industry, the company is headquartered in Memphis and has additional facilities in Thomasville, NC, Bellingham, WA, Mexico, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. ♦

BIOTECH FIRM REGENERON INVESTS IN SARATOGA SPRINGS, NY

Regeneron, a biotech company based in Tarrytown, NY, has reportedly purchased the site of a former Quad Graphics building in Saratoga Springs, NY.

"This acquisition underscores our commitment to growing together with the local community by investing in local economies and creating high-quality jobs

in the area and across New York State," Regeneron said in a written statement.

Tarrytown serves as Regeneron's corporate and research and development headquarters. In 2022, the company announced a \$1.8 billion research, preclinical manufacturing, and support facilities expansion at that campus.

Of this most recent acquisition in Saratoga Springs, the company's September statement also expressed, "This investment highlights our ongoing efforts to support and grow local economies, ensuring that New York and Regeneron continue to thrive together." ♦

HUNTINGTON BANK PLANS RETAIL BRANCH EXPANSION IN THE CAROLINAS

Over the next five years, Huntington Bank will add more than 350 employees and 55 retail branches in the Carolinas. According to the company, the first branches will be located in Charlotte, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem, North Carolina. South Carolina branches will open in Charleston, Columbia, and Greenville.

"We are a national bank that believes in investing locally. We are thrilled to build on our Commercial Banking investment in the region and strengthen our dedication to serving the local customers and communities that are at the heart of our mission," said Heath Campbell, Executive Managing Director and Regional President of the Carolinas.

This investment will build on its 2023 Commercial Banking expansion into the Carolinas and its existing customer base, along with opening its regional headquarters in Charlotte.

"The Carolinas is a fast-growing, highly dynamic region and we are proud to deepen our presence and bring our expertise and capabilities to even more customers in this market," said Brant Standrige, Huntington Consumer and Regional Banking President. ♦

CONNECTICUT WELCOMES HOME MARKET FOODS PLANT

Home Market Foods (HMF), a leading U.S. food manufacturer, recently purchased a former pasta production plant in South Windsor, CT. HMF will invest more than \$70 million to transform the site into a state-of-the-art meat production facility. The facility is planned to open in 2025. By end of 2027, HMF estimates that it will create 210 jobs to operate the South Windsor facility.

HMF is the number one producer of meatballs in North America and a leading supplier to convenience stores and foodservice programs.

"Home Market Foods is thrilled to expand our manufacturing operations

to the state of Connecticut which has a long-standing record of hosting some of the greatest manufacturing companies in the country and to work so closely with the Town of South Windsor to expand its base of jobs and community support," said CEO Doug Atamian. ♦



IN NORTHWEST OHIO, NELSON MANUFACTURING GROWS

Nelson Manufacturing, a maker of specialty semi-trailers and crane attachments, is expanding its northwest Ohio facility. The company currently employs 90 people in Ottawa, OH and expects to hire an additional 18 for this project.

President Tony Niese said the company will hire for positions in engineering, project management, and assembly. The new 73,000 square-foot facility will allow for grit blasting, painting, and assembly. Recognizing the workforce at Nelson Manufacturing, Niese highlighted the employees' talent, mindset, and can-do attitude. "The workforce here—they want to be here, they want to build something great. They want to build something they're proud of. And they're willing to put the work in, and they're smart enough and perfectly capable of doing it." ♦

GOODYEAR CANADA \$575M EXPANSION IN ONTARIO

In August, Goodyear Canada Inc. announced a \$575 million expansion of its Napanee, Ontario facility. The company stated the expansion is central to its objective to modernize this facility, enabling scaled production of tires designed for EVs, as well as increasing the plant's capacity to make all-terrain tires.

"Today's announcement reinforces our long-term commitment to Canada and enhances our agility and flexibility, positioning Goodyear to meet the evolving needs of our customers now and in the future," said Mark Stewart, Goodyear CEO and President. "We are appreciative to the federal, provincial, and local governments for their support and to our Napanee associates for their dedication to building the next generation of tires."

Said Michael Fedchyshyn, Interim CEO and VP, Strategies and Business Solutions of Invest Ontario, "Goodyear's expansion is a significant achievement for both the province and the region. Invest Ontario collaborated closely with partners across all levels of government



The tire maker's continued investment in Ontario, Canada boosts the EV sector there.

to support the company's decision to continue investing in Ontario, a world-class jurisdiction to do business. As a dedicated partner to investors, Invest Ontario is committed to accelerating their success by providing expertise and services specifically tailored to their needs."

Goodyear's Napanee plant has been operating since 1988 and is one of the largest employers locally, currently employing more than 800 workers. Set to create 200 new jobs, this expansion will further boost regional economic development.. ♦

MEXICO'S HIDALGO STATE INVESTING NEARLY \$20B PESOS FOR ECONOMY

The state of Hidalgo, Mexico plans to invest 17 billion pesos into economic development, which is intended to fund 21 projects across in municipalities such as Pachuca, Apan, and Tulancingo. These projects will impact industries, including food, automotive, chemical, metalworking, and manufacturing. In Governor Julio Menchaca's administration, there is a total of 87 projects with an investment of 84,112 billion pesos, which created 122,000 new jobs.

"This record figure in attracting private investment once again demonstrates that this government translates tangible achievements into benefits and well-being for the people of Hidalgo," said Hidalgo Secretary of Economic Development Carlos Henkel.

These planned investments are aimed at having a positive impact on communities, enhancing infrastructure, increasing productive capacity, and promoting sustainable development across the state. ♦

U.S.-INDIA CEO FORUM MEETS FOR SIXTH YEAR

The United States hosted the sixth meeting of the U.S.-India CEO Forum, which was co-chaired by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo and Minister of Commerce and Industry of India Piyush Goyal. The U.S.-India CEO Forum is a platform that convenes leaders of the U.S. and Indian business communities to develop and provide joint recommendations to strengthen bilateral commercial ties and expand trade and investment between India and the United States.

During the meeting in Washington, DC, U.S. and Indian government representatives and CEO Forum members reaffirmed

their commitment to expanding bilateral commerce and trade, driving inclusive economic growth and innovation, and fostering a resilient bilateral partnership.

CEO Forum members, which represent a total of 22 U.S. companies and 25 Indian companies, have made a series of recent announcements advancing U.S.-India commercial engagement. These include:

Lockheed Martin and Tata Advanced Systems Limited's recent signing of a teaming agreement on the C-130J Super Hercules aircraft. The agreement creates a framework to establish a maintenance, repair, and overhaul facility in India to support the Indian Air Force's (IAF) fleet

and other global fleets of C-130J Super Hercules aircraft; and expand the manufacturing and assembly of these aircraft in India to support the IAF's Medium Transport Aircraft program.

Amneal Pharmaceutical's launch of medicines in several new therapeutic areas and the groundbreaking of a peptide manufacturing facility in Ahmedabad, India.

Honeywell International's delivery and commissioning of a 1.4 MWh Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) for the Solar Energy Corporation of India's project on the Lakshadweep Islands, which is India's first on-grid solar initiative using BESS to manage the supply of renewable power. ♦

SOUTH DAKOTA GOED APPOINTS NEW COMMISSIONER

Joe Fiala has been appointed the South Dakota Governor's Office Economic Development (GOED) Commissioner. He joined GOED in 2012 and has served



as Director in Research, Community Development, Business Development, and Partner Relations. Fiala worked in the

software industry before entering economic development in 2007.

NEW MEXICO APPOINTS SECRETARY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Rob Black has been appointed New Mexico Secretary of Economic Development by Governor Michelle Lujan



Grisham. Black previously served as President and CEO of the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce. Prior to that he was the Senior

Director of Community Relations at Pacific Gas and Electric Company in San Francisco. There, Black managed the company's environmental and climate resilience community investments.

SAGINAW FUTURE SELECTS CEO

Saginaw Future appointed Tom Miller Jr. as President and Chief Executive Officer effective January 1, 2025. Miller has more than 20 years of economic development experience, joining Saginaw Future in 2004



as Assistant Economic Developer and is currently Executive Vice President. Miller is heavily invested in Saginaw and the Great Lakes

Bay Region, serving on the boards of the MBS Airport Commission, Saginaw Community Foundation, and is Co-Chair of the Saginaw Medical Diamond, SEDC Board, and CAC Executive Committee.

PARTNERTULSA SELECTS NEW CEO

PartnerTulsa has chosen Garry Clark Jr. as its new Chief Executive Officer. With 18 years of experience in economic and



community development, Clark previously served as President and CEO of the Economic Alliance of Snohomish County

(EASC) in Washington. He has also held leadership positions with North Capitol Main Street in Washington DC, Greater Fremont Development Council (NE), Cuming County Nebraska, and the City of Newberry (FL).

LIBERTY COUNTY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY NAMES NEW CEO



Brynn Grant has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer for the Liberty County Development Authority in

Georgia. Grant has decades of experience of regional leadership and economic development experience ahead of this role. She was previously the CEO of United Way of the Coastal Empire and worked for Savannah Economic Development Authority for 20 years, as CEO for the last seven.

EDC OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY NEW DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development Council (EDC) of St. Lucie County (Florida) has promoted Kadian Knight to Director



of Business Development and hired Glexia Garcia as the Business Manager. Knight joined the EDC in 2023 as

Business Manager. Garcia joined the EDC in August as Business Manager.

TECH PARKS ARIZONA C-LEVEL PROMOTIONS

Marking its 30th year, Tech Parks Arizona recently promoted several employees.



Casey Carrillo is now Executive Director of University of Arizona Center for Innovation (UACI). Patrick Murphy has been

appointed as Chief Operating Officer for Tech Parks Arizona. Eric Smith has been named Chief Innovation Officer, focusing on the growth of the UACI through funding opportunities and corporate innovation partnerships.

GRANBURY, TX NEW DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of Granbury, TX, appointed Shea Hopkins as Director of Economic



Development in August. Prior to this position, Hopkins was Assistant Director of Economic Development for

the City of San Antonio. In this position, she led both Global and Industry divisions which handled incentives and foreign direct investment. Hopkins was also previously Executive Director of the Clarksville-Montgomery County Industrial Development Board in Tennessee. ♦



#1

Cybersecurity
Leader in the U.S.

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INNOVATE



America's Cybersecurity Leader

Virginia is bolstering what is already one of the most educated states in the country through the \$2 billion Tech Talent Investment Program, aimed at doubling the number of graduates each year in computer science and related fields. This investment will ensure a steady supply of qualified Virginians prepared to fill the jobs of the future.

Virginia ranks second only to California in number of citizens employed in the in-demand field of cybersecurity. *Business Facilities* ranked the Commonwealth as the No. 1 Cybersecurity Leader in the United States in 2024. Virginia isn't resting on its laurels — the innovative Commonwealth Cyber Initiative tripled its awards for cybersecurity research grants from 2020 to 2024.

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Virginia Tech Innovation Campus, Alexandria

VIRGINIA

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CYBERSECURITY: SITE SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS

BY ANNE COSGROVE

CYBERSECURITY
IMPACTS ALL
INDUSTRIES, AND
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COLLABORATIONS
OFFER RESOURCES
FOR COMPANIES TO
DRAW UPON.

Cybersecurity is crucial to site selection due to the fact that companies will benefit in locations where resources that protect their information and operations are available. Sites often handle sensitive information. Strong cybersecurity measures help protect against data breaches that could lead to financial loss or reputational damage. Many industries have strict regulations regarding data security. Choosing a site with robust cybersecurity practices ensures compliance with these regulations.

And cyberattacks can disrupt operations. A site with strong cybersecurity can minimize downtime and ensure that business functions continue smoothly. A site known for good cybersecurity practices can enhance customer trust and brand reputation, which is vital for long-term success. Understanding the cybersecurity landscape of a location helps in assessing risks. Sites in regions with higher cyber threats may require more stringent security measures.

Locations with strong cybersecurity are often equipped with better technological infrastructure, which supports overall business performance. Businesses want to attract skilled workers who prioritize cybersecurity. A site with a reputation for strong security can appeal to top talent.

Incorporating cybersecurity considerations into site selection helps ensure a safer, more resilient operational environment.

A large silhouette of a wind turbine dominates the left side of the frame, with several smaller ones in the background. The scene is set against a vibrant sunset sky with orange, pink, and purple hues. The water in the foreground is dark and calm.

NORTH CAROLINA GOES GREEN WITH ENERGY. OTHERS GO GREEN WITH ENVY.

As the **#1 state in America** for renewable energy leadership and the **#1 state in the Southeast** for sustainability, North Carolina can put your company at the forefront of the clean energy transformation. These accolades contributed to CNBC naming North Carolina as America's Top State for Business in 2022 and 2023.

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RALEIGH
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The logo for the state of North Carolina, featuring a stylized white 'N' inside a yellow circle.

**NORTH
CAROLINA**

A STATE OF CYBERSECURITY: VIRGINIA

Virginia is an epicenter of cybersecurity innovation with federal government, government contractors, and commercial cyber companies. Home to key federal agencies like the CIA, NSA, DARPA, CISA, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and the Pentagon. This proximity fosters a strong cybersecurity ecosystem driven by federal defense and intelligence operations.

U.S. Cyber Command and other military branches also have substantial operations in the area, focusing on national defense and cybersecurity strategy.

Virginia has leadership position in data center industry. The state's Loudoun County is home to 35% of known hyper-scale data centers worldwide.

Three subsea cables land in Virginia Beach that connect Virginia to Europe and South America, with a fourth in planning stages that will connect to Africa. Virginia offers 2,000+ miles of fiber and links all major markets in the U.S. with an intersection of mission-critical fiber back-

bones, as well as the highest density of dark fiber in the world.

Fairfax County in Virginia has one of the world's strongest cybersecurity ecosystems. That leadership shines through innovative companies working on every aspect of cybersecurity, educational institutions and trade associations developing the next generation of the cyber workforce, and of course the government agencies defending and strengthening our way of life.

Today, more than 550 cybersecurity companies call Fairfax County home. These companies are part of the even larger concentration of 10,000 tech companies of which many engage in and support missions of consequence, helping secure the national security ecosystem.

The county is located at the doorstep of Washington, DC, and with that all the pertinent decision makers, regulators and federal government agencies that collaborate with the private sector. This proximity allows cybersecurity companies in Fairfax County to access people and resources of influence that other tech-

nology centers, like Silicon Valley, do not offer. Some other key Fairfax advantages:

- ◆ Availability of top talent (access to 60 regional universities enrolling 400,000+ annually and graduating 90,000 annually; top public and private K-12 school systems).
- ◆ Strategic location on the U.S. East Coast, and convenient access to U.S. and global markets.
- ◆ Digital infrastructure and data center capacity six times that of Silicon Valley (megawatts)
- ◆ Access to the world's largest customer, the U.S. federal government.

A SOUTHERN MECCA FOR CYBER: PORT SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Port San Antonio in Texas is home to more than 80 private-and public-sector tenant customers and 18,000 employees; of these jobs, more than 8,000 were created within the past decade. Employers include Boeing's and StandardAero's largest aircraft and engine sustainment and modernization complexes in the world. Additionally, top names in cybersecurity,



Virginia and the Washington, DC region are home to U.S. Cyber Command and other military branches, focused on national defense and cybersecurity strategy.



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industrial robotics, defense, space exploration and other sectors are based on the 1,900-acre Tech Port campus—from globally renowned enterprises to some of the region's fastest-growing technology startups.

Known as "Military City, USA," San Antonio has one of the largest concentrations of military personnel and operations in the nation. There are thousands of uniformed and civilian personnel on the Tech Port campus, where operations include DoD medical, logistics and cybersecurity commands.

Meanwhile, numerous Port aerospace and cybersecurity customers support on-campus and regional defense operations. To accelerate innovation within the DoD, the Port has leveraged its property and partnerships to increase connectivity—from events that bring together the defense and civilian community and to learn more about emerging technologies to bringing in partners such as Capital Factory, which nurtures regional, state-

wide and national startups and provides them a platform to introduce innovations to the commercial and military communities.

Most recently, the Port announced a proposal to build the next-generation campus for the Air Force's cyber headquarters—a state-of-the-art complex focused on maximum readiness, human talent development and the ability to access to Port's growing commercial and educational ecosystem to grow partnerships that ensure defenders have faster and ready access to leading technologies to safeguard national infrastructure.

PUBLIC SECTOR SUPPORTS PRIVATE SECTOR WORKFORCE

The U.S. Department of Commerce's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has awarded cooperative agreements totaling nearly \$3.6 million aimed at building the workforce needed to safeguard enterprises from cybersecurity risks. The grants of roughly \$200,000

each will go to 18 education and community organizations in 15 states that are working to address the nation's shortage of skilled cybersecurity employees.

The cooperative agreements will be overseen by NICE, a NIST-led partnership between government, academia and the private sector focused on cybersecurity education, training and workforce development.

"Our economic and national security depend on a highly skilled workforce capable of defending against ever-increasing cyber threats," said Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and NIST Director Laurie E. Locascio.

"By investing in our cybersecurity workforce, we are not just filling a critical gap. We are creating a future where Americans have access to the training they need to secure high-quality, good-paying jobs."

The NICE-funded CyberSeek Tool, which analyzes data about the cyberse-



The Air and Space Forces Association's Air, Space and Cyber Conference brings together Department of the Air Force leadership, industry experts, academia as well as aerospace and cyberspace specialists from around the world.

PHOTO: U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY CHAD TRULLIO

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curity job market, found that there were nearly 450,000 cybersecurity job openings in the U.S. between January 2023 and January 2024. Only 82 workers were available to fill every 100 cybersecurity job openings in the U.S. during this time.

The organizations receiving the awards will build Regional Alliances and Multistakeholder Partnerships to Stimulate (RAMPS) cybersecurity education and workforce development. These RAMPS projects will align the workforce needs of local business and nonprofit organizations with the goals of the NICE Workforce Framework for Cybersecurity.

"The RAMPS program provides access to cybersecurity careers for individuals from diverse backgrounds, experiences and life circumstances," said NICE Director Rodney Petersen.

"It shines a spotlight on local communities that are working together to create career pathways to good jobs for all Americans and contributes to local and regional economic development by addressing the workforce needs of local businesses."

Many of the RAMPS projects promote curriculum development or education and training at the high school, collegiate or professional levels. Others support work-based learning experiences in the form of internships, apprenticeships or projects. Still others support workshops, bootcamps, competitions and hackathons.

GROWING THE CYBER TALENT PIPELINE EARLY

Port San Antonio, as part of its economic development mission and growth strategy, is focused on connecting people to opportunities. To achieve the latter, the organization has built part-



nerships and helped launch innovative programs—from K-12 STEM/STEAM engagements to university-level and industry-specific training—that introduce people to the sectors thriving on the campus as they grow in their careers.

Among these opportunities, the Port is home to AREA 21, a technology showcase operated by the San Antonio Museum of Science and Technology (SAMSAT), which offers an array of educational programming for people of all ages. It is also home to the Cybersecurity Manufacturing Innovation Institute (CyManII) C4M manufacturing hub, established under the U.S. Department of Energy and operated by the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA).

Virginia's Tech Talent Pipeline Initiative is a \$2 billion initiative aimed at adding approximately 32,000 computer science graduates to the tech talent pipeline over the course of 20 years. Meanwhile, Virginia Colleges and Universities produce more than 13,000 tech relevant degree and certificate completions annually. More than half of these are a bachelor's degree.

Virginia is the first state in the nation to adopt Computer Science standards across the K-12 curriculum, integration these disciplines into Standards of Learning (SOLs) in 2016. Integrated across its leading education system, crucial STEM education begins at the Kindergarten

level. Additional new developments related to cybersecurity talent development include:

- ◆ CodeRVA Regional High School in Richmond is a public high school preparing students for careers in computer science
- ◆ Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJ) in Fairfax, Virginia uses an integrated STEM curriculum.

With a cybersecurity workforce of over 113,000, Fairfax County is the leading metro area for the information security analyst workforce. There are 22 Cybersecurity Centers for Academic Excellence in the Washington, DC metro area.

Funded by the Virginia General Assembly, the Commonwealth Cyber Initiative (CCI) was created to create an ecosystem of innovation in cybersecurity. Regional universities, including George Mason University, Northern Virginia Community, and Marymount University are part of CCI.

George Mason University, based in Fairfax, holds one of the longest track records of information security training advances in the U.S. and continues to be a leader in this space nationally. In 2020, a new cyber security engineering department was formed to support BS and MS students working towards degrees in cyber security engineering.

Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) is a leader in cybersecurity and boasts one of the largest cybersecurity programs in the nation. NVCC's cybersecurity programs prepare students for an entry-level position or augment their existing skills.

Investing in cybersecurity is not just a protective measure; it's a crucial component of sustainable growth in an interconnected world. 🌐

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TECH PORT
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The AI Landscape & Location Decisions

BY TOM GRESHAM

WITH ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE
IMPACTING ALL
INDUSTRIES, HERE IS A
LOOK AT SOME OF
THE LATEST
DEVELOPMENTS.

The accelerating emergence of artificial intelligence into industries of all kinds is making it an increasingly important consideration for companies' site selection decisions. Against that backdrop, regions are devoting heightened attention to their AI ecosystems, not only looking to strengthen them but to emphasize them to site selectors. These regions are focusing on how their existing—and future—resources can support a company's AI needs, particularly as they relate to R&D and workforce. Meanwhile, AI also is offering new opportunities in the site selection process itself to help match companies with sites that best meet their distinct needs.

Here's a look at how the link between AI and site selection is growing stronger.

ADOPTING AI IN WISCONSIN FOR HIGH-QUALITY JOB GROWTH

In Wisconsin, Governor Tony Evers created the Governor's Task Force on Artificial Intelligence. The task force released a set of recommendations in July 2024 that called for expanding digital literacy, developing flexible training programs, improving government service, and providing incentives for industries to adopt AI.

Missy Hughes, Secretary and CEO of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), said Wisconsin's AI environment is built on a foundation of its educational institutions, such as the University of Wisconsin System, and its partnerships with major corporations, such as Microsoft. "Our comprehensive AI workforce development plan prioritizes ethical decision-making and equitable access, aiming to expand digital literacy,

IMAGE: N. HANIGER/NIST

provide flexible training and remove barriers to employment,” she said.

“These efforts are complemented by advanced research and innovation at facilities like the AI Co-Innovation Lab, housed at UW-Milwaukee and run in partnership with Microsoft, where manufacturers and entrepreneurs collaborate with AI experts to drive business growth and technological advancement,” said Hughes.

“Through these initiatives, Wisconsin is fostering industry adoption of AI to enhance competitiveness and create high-quality jobs. Wisconsin’s role in AI research is further strengthened by conferences like the IEEE/WIC International Conference on Web Intelligence, which fosters innovation across various sectors, including health care, education, and smart living.”

Hughes noted that AI is transforming industries across Wisconsin beyond just high-tech firms.

“While Microsoft is investing \$3.3 billion in an AI data center in Mount Pleasant, it’s also launching a Co-Innovation Lab in partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and businesses in sectors like manufacturing, health care and agriculture are gaining access guidance and cutting-edge tools needed to integrate AI into their companies,” Hughes said. “These innovations are helping companies improve efficiency, boost productivity and enhance their competitiveness.”

And Wisconsin’s designation as a Regional Technology Hub solidifies the state’s leadership in biohealth and personalized medicine.

“This recognition, combined with advancements in AI, positions Wisconsin

as a key player in future tech innovation,” Hughes said. “Our state offers businesses diverse opportunities across sectors, while also creating pathways to high-paying jobs. These developments ensure that Wisconsin continues to lead in both technological growth and workforce development, offering a competitive edge to industries statewide.”

PENNSYLVANIA LOOKS TO LEAD ON REAL-WORLD AI SOLUTIONS

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro signed an executive order in September 2023 that established standards for state agencies to use and innovate with AI technology, focusing on ethical and responsible uses to serve residents.

“I think it’s exciting that we have embraced generative AI, and the governor’s office is really working aggressively to

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make Pennsylvania a leader in innovation and economic development,” said Jen Gilburg, Deputy Secretary of Technology and Entrepreneurship for Pennsylvania.

“We put forth a new 10-year economic plan, and AI and technology is one of the five pillars that are areas of focus. The other areas are agriculture, energy, life sciences, and manufacturing. Although AI and robotics is the official fifth category, it’s almost a horizontal one that will impact all the other verticals. It’s definitely being prioritized here.”

As an example of how AI can impact the other areas, Gilburg points to work being done in Pennsylvania using AI to accelerate the rate of drug discovery and improve imaging for patient care.

“If you look at life sciences, it’s anticipated to create more than 6,500 net new jobs in Pennsylvania in the next 10 years, and 60% of that growth will be concentrated in R&D,” she said. “Because we’re in a state that’s really embracing AI, it’s a really great place for those types of companies to come and grow.”

Reshoring manufacturing is a critical trend in site selection that has emerged from the pandemic. In order for that effort to be successful, though, Gilburg said adopting AI-enabled automation in the U.S. is essential to remain competitive from a cost standpoint with overseas locations where workers are paid very little. As an example, she pointed to semiconductor manufacturing and the push to increase its presence in the U.S.

“Automation cost jobs 30 years ago, so we tend to think of automation and manufacturing as the boogeyman, but really automation is going to be what allows us to bring those jobs and bring those elements of our semiconductor supply chain back to the United States,” said Gilburg.

Automation also will help manufacturers remain competitive and operational as workers retire in waves as the “silver tsunami” arrives. “Having automation available to help these manufacturers stay in

business if they can’t hire workers is going to be imperative,” Gilburg said.

Site selectors in manufacturing pay close attention to the extent of a region’s embrace of AI and automation.

“Having a workforce and having strong R&D locally is really attractive to site selectors,” Gilburg said. “Automation is coming—it’s how manufacturing will survive, it’s how we’ll reshore—so if you have a region that’s pushing back on that, they’re not training their workforce on it, they’re not working with the R&D at the universities on it, I have seen that be a deterrent for site selectors.”

As a result, Gilburg said, Pennsylvania leans in on its efforts to embrace AI and related technology, focusing in part on the state’s five R1 research universities and the resources and young, highly educated workers that they offer—and their steadfast efforts to use new, sophisticated technology to solve real-world challenges.

“We have university students working in manufacturing that are going to help companies automate,” Gilburg said. “We fund a number of programs where we partner universities with manufacturers to help them solve problems on their line. ... Having a state where we’re facilitating those connections is a huge value-add when companies are looking to relocate into the commonwealth.”

WASHINGTON, DC SITS AT THE HEART OF AI DECISION-MAKING

Kevin Morgan, Vice President of the Washington DC Economic Partnership (WDCEP), said AI is growing quickly in the DC region with a particular focus on governance (regulation, policy) and responsible use of AI. In fact, he said Washington, DC has assumed a central place in AI decision-making and innovation. He noted that AI job postings in the area even surpassed the San Francisco Bay area, according to JLL’s Future of AI report.

“Additionally, countless AI conferences

are based here in Washington, DC,” Morgan said. “The leading technologies, executives and policymakers all come here. This is where the decisions—and business deals—are made in AI.”

In Washington, DC, Morgan said there is a focus on incorporating AI into business/government processes; an emphasis on the use of AI in national security/defense priorities (including cyber); and an interest in ensuring that AI/automated decision-making processes are inclusive and correctly reflect the needs and considerations of the city’s diverse population. Along those lines, the city’s Office of the Chief Technology Officer is spearheading an AI Values and Strategic Plan.

For companies considering new sites, Morgan said Washington, DC, is at the heart of a regional hotbed of AI activity, pointing out that governance and technology regulation is driving the sector. “If a company wants to help shape the future of a trillion-dollar industry, there is no better place to do it than right here in DC,” he said.

“Federal government AI innovation contracts/grants offer stable revenue for companies innovating in AI,” Morgan said. “Proximity to policymakers on Capitol Hill and access to federal regulators provides AI companies and workers the opportunity to help shape the future of AI not just in the U.S., but globally with access to 175-plus embassies, global NGOs, leading think tanks and more.”

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE SITE SELECTION PROCESS

A report in January 2024 from the Site Selectors Guild, “The Potential and Limitations of AI in the Site Selection Industry,” shed light on the role that AI is poised to play in the site selection process going forward.

The report highlighted that 40% of the Guild’s members indicated that they already use AI platforms for day-to-day

functions in a November 2023 survey. Most of those who said they had used AI said their primary use was to distill and analyze the large amounts of data needed for the site selection process. In general, guild members said AI offered an important potential time-saving tool but one that should be treated with caution and scrutiny to ensure it provides “trustworthy input to the site selection process.”

In the City of Henderson, Nevada, the economic development team is providing site selectors a view into the state of its industry landscape with an AI-powered Target Industry Dashboard. Using AI to maintain a public-facing database and introduced in late 2023, the tool gives users the latest information related to employment, wages, and gross regional product in Henderson.

The city completed a Target Industry Study identifying five industries—Back-Office Management and Support Services; Electrical Equipment and Components Manufacturing; Financial, and Credit Services; Logistics Management and Technologies; and Media and Sports Production. That led to the drive to create a dashboard with current data.

Says Jared Smith, Director of Economic Development and Tourism for the City of Henderson, “We brought in AI once we knew the data points we wanted to include. Using trusted sources (including U.S. BLS and Lightcast), we direct the AI to those sources, which feeds into the dashboard.”

“AI did not help us decide what our targeted industries were—AI is assisting the city to monitor the information in real-time,” he explains.

When asked how the City of Henderson envisions the role of its AI-powered Target Industry Dashboard in site selection, Smith says, “In our experience, site selectors want to visit economic developers’ websites, get the information they need, and contact you when they are ready for a discussion. With AI, the process may be the same, but we want our data to be current, so that the site selector knows the information they are getting from us is up to date.”

AI technology has the potential to transform site selection decisions by leveraging real-time updates, data analytics, predictive modeling, and machine learning. By integrating these capabilities, AI helps companies make more strategic, data-driven decisions, ultimately improving operational efficiency and market positioning. 

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Illinois Is Focused On The Future

GOVERNOR JB PRITZKER IS LEADING
THE CHARGE TOWARD THE NEW ECONOMY,
WITH INCENTIVES AND OTHER TOOLS
TO GROW BUSINESS.

BY ANNE COSGROVE

During 2023, Illinois saw stellar economic growth, which has continued in 2024 under the leadership of Governor JB Pritzker.

As one indicator, during 2023 the number of jobs created by the state's Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program and the Reimagining Energy and Vehicles (REV) program increased more than 50%, from 2,691 to 4,279 with the number of retained jobs increasing from 151 to 2,962. By comparison, prior to the pandemic in 2019, company investments from EDGE totaled \$348 million, new jobs totaled 1,667, and REV did not yet exist.

And, through the Advantage Illinois (AI) program, the state issued a record 145 low-interest loans totaling \$35.7 million to small businesses—the most issued in a year since the program's inception in 2012. Nearly 70% of loans were provided to Socially and Economically Disadvantaged



Individuals (SEDI) or through the Fund for the Advancement of Minority Enterprises (FAME). The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is expanding small business support due to \$350 million in funding as part of the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

With competitive incentives, modern infrastructure, significant transportation options, and an abundant and qualified workforce, Illinois is attracting companies making large-scale, long-term investments.

“Illinois’ business attraction strategy is focused on providing job creators what they need for their businesses to thrive here.”

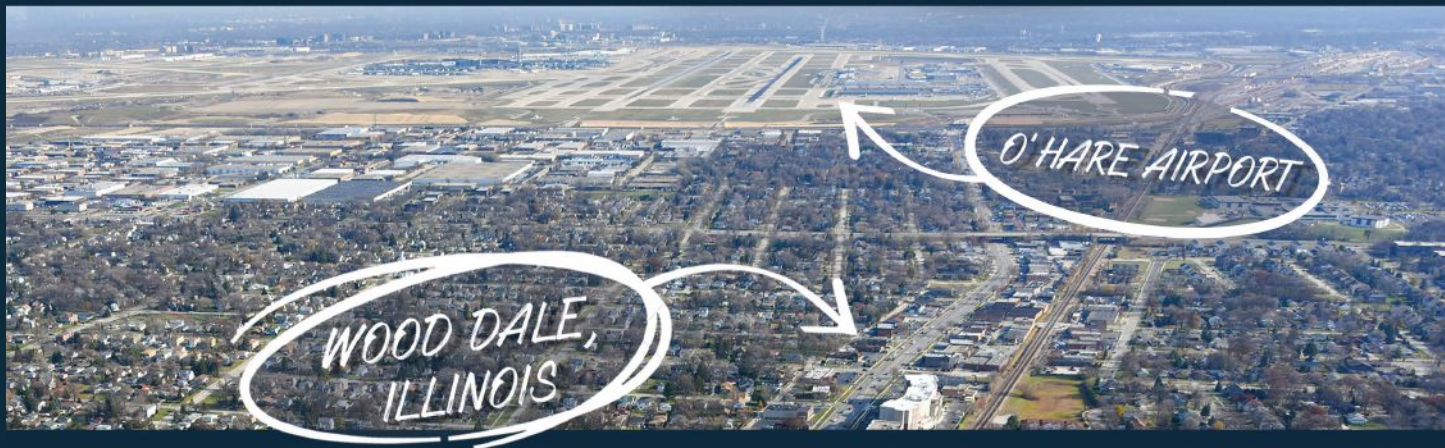
— GOVERNOR JB PRITZKER

Business Facilities recently spoke with Gov. Pritzker, who took office in January 2019, about the latest for business and residents in Illinois.

Business Facilities: Please tell us about the business climate in Illinois. What are highlights for corporate expansions, as well as companies considering locating in the state?

Governor JB Pritzker: With some of the nation's largest companies calling Illinois home, and with record numbers of small businesses and startups choosing the state in the last few years, Illinois'

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PsiQuantum has announced plans to build the first US-based utility-scale, fault-tolerant quantum computer at the former US Steel South Works property in Chicago, IL.

business climate is more attractive than it has been in decades. Highlights include:

PsiQuantum selected Illinois as the location for its ambitious project to build the world's largest quantum computer. The company has committed to invest more than \$1 billion in a 300,000-square-foot facility. Supported by a MICRO incentive and site readiness assistance, this development will anchor the Illinois Quantum and Microelectronics Park located on Chicago's South Side.

Rivian, located in Normal, chose Illinois over Georgia to build its new highly anticipated R2 model electric vehicle. The company committed to investing \$1.5 billion, creating 500 new manufacturing jobs in the next five years, and retaining 6,000 jobs at the facility over the course of the REV agreement.

After a competitive nationwide search, Gotion decided to locate its new state-of-the-art \$2 billion electric vehicle (EV) lithium battery manufacturing plant in Manteno. Bolstered by a Reimagining Energy and Vehicles (REV Illinois) incentive package and the new Invest in Illinois fund, Gotion's decision to locate its new gigafactory here speaks to the state's growing reputation as an EV manufacturing power-

“The state of Illinois will be guided by four overarching economic development goals over the next five years, which are laid out in [the] 2024 Economic Growth Plan.”

erhouse and represents a significant step forward in growing the EV ecosystem and supply chain. This investment means 2,600 new full-time jobs that are paid at least 120% of the average wage of similar job classifications in Kankakee County.

Ferrero, located in Bloomington, has made significant investments to its facility over the past two years, including launching a new chocolate factory which opened in 2024. Supported by an EDGE incentive, Ferrero is investing an additional \$214 million to build a Kinder Bueno production line—the first outside of Europe. Ferrero's investment will create 200 new food production jobs.

BF: What are target industries for Illinois in 2024? Would you highlight a project or two that has chosen the state for their business, and what attracted those decision-makers?

Gov. Pritzker: Illinois is laying the foundation for long-term growth by focusing on key growth industries:

- ◆ Life sciences
- ◆ Quantum computing, AI, and microelectronics
- ◆ Clean energy production and manufacturing
- ◆ Advanced manufacturing
- ◆ Next generation agriculture, agriculture tech, and food processing
- ◆ Transportation, distribution, and logistics

Manner Polymers is locating a new facility in Mt. Vernon for the production of flexible PVC compounds for wires and cables. The facility will be powered by a 15-acre solar field located on site. The company plans to invest \$54 million and create more than 60 jobs for the Southern Illinois region. Construction on the project started in fall 2023.

With competitive incentives through REV Illinois, unmatched infrastructure, and access to markets, as well as an abundant and qualified workforce, Manner Polymers selected Illinois to locate its solar-powered facility after considering locations in Arkansas, Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The comprehensive REV Illinois incentive package encourages forward-thinking manufacturers to invest in renewable energy, while aligning with the state's initiative to increase production and usage of EVs.

BF: What incentives and other programs are emphasized to encourage retention of businesses and encourage others to come to the state?

Gov. Pritzker: Illinois' business attraction strategy is focused on providing job creators what they need for their businesses to thrive here, including world-class sites, skilled workforce, high-quality customer service, and strategic incen-

tives. Illinois' business development incentives are stronger than ever. For six consecutive years, we've successfully led efforts in the State Capitol to pass sweeping upgrades to our suite of incentives.

A few examples of newly established programs include:

- ◆ EDGE for Startups, allowing new companies without a corporate income tax liability to claim EDGE credits against their withholding liability
- ◆ REV and MICRO, which provide a larger package of incentives for large employers making investments in electric vehicles, renewable, and semiconductor manufacturing
- ◆ The Invest in Illinois Fund, a "closing fund" that allows Illinois to close the potential gap in incentives or costs for major employers

The state will continue to leverage these incentives and look for opportunities to deploy them in a way that brings well-paying job opportunities to Illinois residents while maximizing the net economic and fiscal benefit to the state.

BF: What are the key issues facing Illinois in terms of business development going forward? How are you addressing these issues?

Gov. Pritzker: The State of Illinois will be guided by four overarching economic development goals over the next five years, which are laid out in Illinois' 2024 Economic Growth Plan:

- ◆ Focus on high growth sectors and continue overall business climate improvements.
- ◆ Advance comprehensive economic development efforts for business growth and attraction.
- ◆ Promote equitable growth by empowering workers, entrepreneurs, and communities.
- ◆ Build out the new clean energy economy.

BF: What else would you like to share about Illinois when it comes to site selection—and doing business here?



Ferrero in Bloomington, IL has made significant investments to its facilities over the past two years, including opening a new chocolate factory in May 2024. Shown here is an investment announcement from the company in 2022.

Gov. Pritzker: With competitive incentives, modernized infrastructure, unmatched transportation options to ship goods around the world, and an abundant and highly qualified workforce, Illinois is winning over companies looking to make large-scale, long-term investments. The State of Illinois, alongside its

partners, work tirelessly to support the needs of Illinois companies and companies in the pipeline. DCEO provides direct grant support and walks companies through the process every step of the way.

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BY NORA CALEY

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BUSINESSES CONTINUE
TO THRIVE, THE RIGHT
SITES ARE CRUCIAL TO
SUCCESS.

From blockbuster drugs that garner media attention to smaller innovations that help millions maintain health, the biotech and pharmaceutical industries have an impact on everyone's life. Meanwhile, research and manufacturing in these industries support jobs and positively affect economies. According to "The Economic Impact of the U.S. Biopharmaceutical Industry: 2022 National and State Estimates," a report from the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) and TEconomy Partners, LLC, biopharmaceutical workers are employed at more than 1,500 manufacturing facilities across 47 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. They work in high-paying jobs, as the report noted that average annual compensation was \$157,712 per worker directly employed by the biopharmaceutical sector.

Also according to the report, the U.S. biopharmaceutical industry exceeded \$800 billion in direct output in 2022 and contributed an additional \$850 billion in output through its suppliers and other sectors of the economy.

The industry has had its challenges lately, including decreased sales post-pandemic. According to the 2024 edition of "Beyond Borders: EY Biotechnology Report," revenues for U.S. and European biotech companies dropped 10.7% from 2022 to 2023. The report maintained that recent sales trends are simply part of an economic pendulum swing, as the decrease came after a sales spike driven by Covid-19 vaccines and therapeutics. Biotech companies are responding in several ways, the report noted, such as conserving cash



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New Jersey's **unparalleled transportation network**, fast **access to Newark Liberty International Airport** along with New York City and Philadelphia, and its ranking as the **#1 state in the country for manufacturing** - with 10% of its GDP stemming from this sector, and **eligibility for NJEDA incentives** - combined with - a **highly educated workforce**, make the state ripe for continued innovation.

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 - o Office
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LOCATIONS FOR THE BIOTECH / PHARMA INDUSTRY

and creating efficiencies, optimizing their business models and entering into mergers and acquisitions. In fact, there was an 86% increase in M&A activity compared to the previous year, and a 38% increase on the previous five-year average.

Product innovation will be one driver of future sales. The Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, part of the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, reported that in 2023 it approved 55 novel drugs, or new drugs that had never been approved or marketed in the U.S. In addition, there were several approvals that expanded the use of previously approved drugs.

Here are some regions that are attracting biotech and pharma companies.

FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND: THRIVING HUB FOR LIFE SCIENCES

Frederick County, Maryland, is a prime destination for life science companies, driven by its ideal location, skilled workforce, and robust industry support. As the northern anchor of the I-270 Technology Corridor, Frederick County is located within a one-hour drive to two metropolitan cities, Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD. This proximity offers direct access to federal government agencies, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA),

and to one of the largest clusters of life science companies in the country.

The life sciences ecosystem within Frederick County is thriving and provides resources and opportunities to support businesses from inception through commercial manufacturing and distribution. Frederick County provides incubation and acceleration through the Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc. (FITCI), speed-to-market permitting, a favorable business climate, including incentives and tax savings, access to three international airports, and dedicated sites suitable for research and development and commercial manufacturing operations.

As the fastest growing county in Maryland, Frederick County is recognized as a thriving hub for innovation and scientific advancement. The county's robust ecosystem is anchored by Fort Detrick, which has a \$12 billion economic impact on the state of Maryland. Fort Detrick is home to some of the nation's leading experts in bio-defense, medical research, and infectious diseases. The proximity to this significant research hub offers biotech companies access to critical partnerships, funding opportunities, and cutting-edge research.

Several factors have contributed to Frederick County's success in attracting and expanding life science companies.

The region's highly educated workforce provides a steady pipeline of skilled professionals with expertise in biology, chemistry, engineering, and related fields. Frederick County is strategically positioned within the larger BioHealth Capital Region, which boasts over 80 federal labs, multiple academic institutions, and top-tier research centers. This interconnected network of resources strengthens the region's capacity for innovation and makes Frederick County a prime location for biotech companies looking to tap into this collaborative environment.

Frederick County remains committed to fostering a business-friendly environment that attracts companies at the forefront of medical research, biotechnology, and pharmaceutical development. With an impressive 130 companies located here and the continued expansion of leading biotech firms, Frederick County remains a key player in the life sciences sector.

Kite, a Gilead Company and a leader in CAR-T cell therapy, chose to locate its east coast manufacturing facility in Frederick, where the company produces cutting-edge cell therapy treatments for cancer patients. Lonza announced their significant renovation plans for its manufacturing facility to support its bioscience operations. The significant investment by these global leaders is a testament to the strategic value Frederick County offers in supporting cutting-edge biotech manufacturing.

The Frederick County Office of Economic Development (FCOED) actively engages with the life science industry to ensure that businesses have access to programs and resources, workforce, tax incentives, and financial support.

Visit www.DiscoverFrederickMD.com for more information.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND: A CUTTING-EDGE ECOSYSTEM FOR LIFE SCIENCES

Anyone who drives or takes the Metro in any direction within Montgomery County, Maryland will encounter a life science or technology company respon-



Kite, a Gilead Company and a leader in CAR-T cell therapy, chose to locate its east coast manufacturing facility in Frederick County, Maryland.

PHOTO: KITE, A GILEAD COMPANY



Proximity to critical federal agencies, such as the National Cancer Institute, creates fertile ground for innovation across Montgomery County, Maryland.

sible for a major breakthrough. The county, which borders the nation's capital, is where companies across leading industries establish operations to deliver on their most ambitious projects.

With its strategic location, population of over one million residents and more than 33% of the adult workforce holding an advanced degree, Maryland's Montgomery County has become a well-established business ecosystem. In fact, it anchors the third largest biopharma cluster in the country.

Local incentives fuel growth in Montgomery County, the only county in the nation to offer a local biotechnology investment tax credit and a local match for SBIR/STTR (Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer) awards. These incentives help companies advance their technologies toward commercialization.

"There's a reason why so many life science and technology companies choose to locate here," says Prayas Neupane, Director of Economic Development at Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation. "We have the right talent, infrastructure, and highly educated workforce, along with ready-to-go partners that contribute significantly to our collaborative environment. It all adds up to a thriving and robust ecosystem here in Montgomery County."

Maryland's Montgomery County employs approximately 40,000 workers in the life sciences sector, while its tech sector supports 90,000 employees. The county offers a rich and diverse talent pool, with the highest concentration of STEM jobs in the U.S. and the second-highest ranking for professional and technical workers.

This is no coincidence—initiatives like BioHub Maryland and the National Institute of Bioprocessing Research and Training focus on upskilling and cultivating talent pipelines, ensuring a steady supply of skilled professionals.

The county's proximity to critical federal agencies, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the National Institute of Standards

PHOTO: MONTGOMERY COUNTY EDC

INNOVATION
BIOTECHNOLOGY

TOPEKA KANSAS

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LOCATIONS FOR THE BIOTECH / PHARMA INDUSTRY

and Technology (NIST), as well as 36 federal labs, creates fertile ground for innovation. This convergence of resources fuels some of the world's most important scientific breakthroughs in both the private and public sectors.

Global companies recognizing the value of being at the epicenter of breakthroughs continue to build their presence here.

AstraZeneca's planned expansion is one prime example. "We are incredibly excited that more than 150 new highly skilled jobs are being created to bring our scientific work and therapies to clinical trials, which could transform the lives of patients around the world," said Pam Cheng, EVP of Global Operations and IT and Chief Sustainability Officer at AstraZeneca, in a company statement. "This new \$300 million investment will accelerate our ambition to make next-generation cell therapy a reality."

In technology, the defense giant Blue Halo recently announced they will grow their operations in Montgomery County by establishing a new 57,000-square-foot facility in Germantown. The expansion will support research, development,

and manufacturing and will create 200 high-paying jobs in the state.

Visit www.ThinkMoco.com for more information.

NORTH CAROLINA: VIBRANT BIOTECH & LIFE SCIENCES MARKETS

North Carolina, ranked in the top five states for life sciences by *Business Facilities*, is home to a thriving ecosystem specializing in bio and pharmaceutical manufacturing. Propelled by a low cost of doing business, a concentrated workforce, and tailored training programs for talent at every level, companies at any stage, from startups to Fortune 500s, find success throughout North Carolina's vibrant biotech and life sciences markets.

There are more than 830 life sciences companies throughout North Carolina, 100 of which are biomanufacturing firms producing life-saving therapies, pharmaceuticals, and vaccines. Just this year, seven life sciences companies have announced they are opening or expanding operations in North Carolina, creating more than 2,500 new jobs and generating \$6 billion in capital investment. An

increasingly attractive market for foreign direct investment in the life sciences sector, five of these seven firms are based in Europe and Asian markets.

The core of North Carolina's life sciences sector resides in Research Triangle Park (RTP), North America's largest research park. Ranked the #1 market for biomanufacturing by JLL, Eli Lilly, Fujifilm Diosynth Biotechnologies, Novartis, and Pfizer are just a few of the global leaders with operations in RTP. Anchored by three Tier-1 research institutions, Duke University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and North Carolina State University, the region consistently ranks as a top recipient of National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding.

Just to the east of the Research Triangle is North Carolina's Biopharma Crescent, a region spanning from Wilson to Greenville with a heavy concentration of biopharmaceutical manufacturers. Supported by a biopharma manufacturing workforce of 10,000, community colleges in the region have developed a customized certification program to ensure a steady pipeline of manufacturing technicians.

Health and life science startups specializing in biologics, gene therapy, and regenerative medicine are finding success in Winston-Salem, bolstered by the research capabilities of Wake Forest University School of Medicine, Novant Health, and Atrium Health, two of the largest health care providers in the Carolinas.

North Carolina's robust infrastructure supports biotechnology manufacturers statewide. Four international airports and two coastal ports offer domestic and global connectivity. The Port of Wilmington, named among the top ports nationwide for efficiency, is especially equipped for the unique shipping needs of biopharma products, offering three million cubic feet of cold storage, blast freezing, and USDA inspection service abilities.

Distinguished submarkets statewide offer a skilled, growing workforce, strong research infrastructure, and lower oper-



The East Carolina University Life Sciences and Biotechnology lab in Greenville, North Carolina

PHOTO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP OF NORTH CAROLINA

ating costs than traditional life sciences hubs in the northeast and west coast. North Carolina is the ideal choice for relocating and expanding biotech and biopharma manufacturing companies.

Visit <https://EDPNC.com> for more information.

TOPEKA, KANSAS: BIOTECH AND PHARMA INDUSTRIES THRIVE IN THIS MIDWEST CAPITAL

From the outside looking in, it's easy to underestimate Topeka, Kansas. But below the surface, the city is poised to make waves in the biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. Nestled in the heart of the Midwest, Topeka is rapidly emerging as a critical hub for innovation, particularly in these sectors, and major opportunities are quickly unfolding.

Topeka isn't just another capital city, and its burgeoning innovation ecosystem is a testament to that. Centrally located within the continental U.S., Topeka is at the center of a growing regional network that continues to attract national attention.

BioKansas is one organization leading the charge in advancing life sciences across the state. Meanwhile, the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility (NBAF) in nearby Manhattan, KS, underscores the region's importance in biosecurity. NBAF, with its Biosafety Level 4 (BSL-4) containment capabilities—the only laboratories of its kind in the country—cements the region's status as a key player in protecting public health. Regional economic development proposals for the KC Bio-Hub Tech Hub, as well as Kansas State University's NSF Engines-backed project to advance biosecurity and biomanufacturing in northeast Kansas, further support the region's commitment to innovation in the biosciences.

What's particularly exciting is Topeka's role in the Kansas City Animal Health Corridor, which boasts the world's largest concentration of animal health companies. This corridor accounts for a staggering 56% of global animal health, diagnostics, and pet food sales, making it a critical area

for biotech and pharma advancements. Topeka, with its strategic location and strong infrastructure, is uniquely positioned to capitalize on this momentum.

Seeing this potential, Silicon Valley-based Plug and Play, the world's leading innovation platform, chose Topeka for its first animal health vertical in early 2020, adding its ag tech vertical in 2023. Supported by key partners like Hill's Pet Nutrition, Cargill, Bimini Pet Health and GO Topeka, the Plug and Play Topeka startup accelerator has become a breeding ground for breakthroughs in areas like alternative proteins, companion animal and livestock monitoring, early disease detection, drug and vaccine development, and sustainable packaging. With more than 90 startups in animal health and over 80 in ag tech having already graduated from the program, and numerous successful partnerships forged, Plug and Play Topeka is a testament to the city's growing influence in the biotech and pharma industries.

Adding to the excitement is the annual Plug and Play Expo, held right here in Kansas' capital. This event is a must-see for anyone interested in the future of

biotech and pharma. It's where graduate startups from the accelerator pitch their groundbreaking ideas and showcase their demos to a captivated audience of investors, industry leaders, and innovators. The Expo highlights the cutting-edge work being done in Topeka and demonstrates the city's growing reputation as a center for biotech and pharma excellence.

Education and access to funding are also pillars steering Topeka's success. With Washburn University in the city and both Kansas State University and the University of Kansas just a short drive away, Topeka benefits from strong academic partnerships that help fuel the local talent pool. Funding resources are also plentiful, with support available through GO Topeka's small business incentives program, Net-Work Kansas, the Kansas Department of Commerce, the K-State tech validation fund, and a network of angel investors and venture capital groups. Moreover, having the Kansas Statehouse nearby ensures Topeka businesses have a direct line to policymakers, giving local companies a voice in shaping industry futures.

Visit www.GoTopeka.com for more information. 📍



Attendees at the Plug and Play Expo held in June in Topeka, Kansas learn about the future of biotech and pharma.

INNOVATING THE CHIPS LANDSCAPE

BY KYLE PESCHLER

THE SEMICONDUCTOR
INDUSTRY IS
ON THE MOVE WITH
RECORD INDUSTRY
INVESTMENT AND
SALES, AND WITH
NEW ECOSYSTEMS
DEVELOPING.

Building a foundation for a digital economy, semiconductors have enabled innovations to make a better connected, and more efficient world. Semiconductors, or chips, power essential and wide-reaching tools, including smartphones, vehicles, and medical devices. And these are essential building blocks of the technologies for the future, including artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and clean energy.

In its recently released “2024 State Of The U.S. Semiconductor Industry” report, the Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) highlights opportunities for continued growth and innovation. The report also highlights current and upcoming challenges to sustained success.

According to the SIA report, in 2023 industry global sales reached \$527 billion and nearly one trillion semiconductors were sold globally. And despite a cyclical market downturn, the demand for semiconductors remains high. Estimates from World Semiconductor Trade Statistics project sales to increase to more than \$600 billion in 2024.

Rising demand has prompted new industry investments to increase chip production. SIA pointed to the 2022 U.S. CHIPS and Science Act as significant to the U.S. being forecast to more than triple its semiconductor fabrication capacity and secure a larger share of new private investment in manufacturing. This forecast is according to a May 2024 SIA-Boston Consulting Group report, which also forecast the U.S. will grow its share of advanced (less than 10nm) chip manufacturing to 28% of global capacity by 2032.

PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK/STARREAL

Amidst the current and anticipated industry growth, SIA acknowledges the challenges, which include the ongoing demand for skilled talent. A 2023 SIA-Oxford Economics study projected a shortfall of 67,000 technicians, computer scientists, and engineers in the semiconductor industry by 2030 and a gap of 1.4 million of these workers throughout the broader U.S. economy.

The report also acknowledges that policy challenges remain, including continued implementation of the CHIPS and Science Act; reinforcing U.S. leadership in semiconductor research, design, and manufacturing; and maintaining open access to overseas markets.

In July, SEMI, the global industry association, released its “Mid-Year Total Semiconductor Equipment Forecast—OEM Perspective,” which found worldwide sales of total semiconductor manufacturing equipment by original equipment manufacturers was forecast to set a new industry record, reaching \$109 billion in 2024, growing 3.4% year-on-year. Semiconductor manufacturing equipment growth is expected to continue in 2025, with sales forecast to set a new high of \$128 billion in 2025, driven by both the front-end and back-end segments.

Said Ajit Manocha, SEMI president and CEO, “The global semiconductor industry is demonstrating its strong fundamentals and growth potential supporting the diverse range of disruptive applications emerging from the Artificial Intelligence wave.”

DUTCHESS COUNTY, NY: GROWING GLOBAL SEMICONDUCTOR HUB

Located between New York City and Albany in the Hudson Valley, Dutchess County is in a prime position to grow its already-dynamic semiconductor industry, which is anchored by IBM, onsemi, and Advanced Micro Devices (AMD), along with scores of suppliers. Nearly 80 semiconductor facilities are within a 60-minute drive of Dutchess County.

“Dutchess County has all the right ingredients to elevate as a semiconductor investment magnet,” said Sarah Lee, CEO of Think Dutchess Alliance for Business. “We offer a strategic location with available sites at the heart of New York’s semi-

conductor corridor, a skilled workforce, a business-friendly climate with no corporate income tax for manufacturers and powerful economic incentives through the state.”

Thriving Semiconductor Ecosystem. IBM, which has conducted business in



Where the Semiconductor Industry Thrives

With secure proximity to major urban markets, availability of high-powered colocation sites, aggressive incentives and initiatives focused on a future workforce, it's no wonder why IBM, onsemi and numerous other semiconductor companies choose Dutchess County as home.

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LOCATIONS FOR THE SEMICONDUCTOR INDUSTRY

Dutchess County for nearly 75 years, is known for developing groundbreaking innovations in the semiconductor and technology industry. During a 2022 visit, President Biden highlighted the company's plans to invest \$20 billion in growing its microchip research and development sector.

Dutchess County is also home to onsemi's largest chip manufacturing facility in the U.S. After acquiring the East Fishkill 300mm fab in 2019, the company invested more than \$1.3 billion in establishing the nation's sole 12-inch power discrete image sensor fab.

AMD's recent expansion to Dutchess County also elevates New York as an epi-

Located between New York City and Albany, Dutchess County is in a prime position to grow its already dynamic semiconductor industry ecosystem into the future.

center for the burgeoning semiconductor industry. The global company is expected to bring 165 new jobs to the Hudson Valley by 2025.

A robust supply chain further enriches Dutchess County's semiconductor ecosystem. Among companies currently thriving in the area are: Solid State Cooling (precision temperature controls), eMagin (OLED microdisplays), Marco Board House, Mettix Technology Corporation (circuit boards and other electronic services), Hybrid Electrostatic Industries (hybrid electrostatic chucks and other products) and DocuWare (process digitization and management).

Fostering Semiconductor Investment Attraction. Companies choosing to locate in Dutchess County can also leverage several new state incentive programs. Making



At its core, iPark 84 in East Fishkill, NY is a technology workplace where anchor tenants such as GlobalFoundries, IBM, and eMagin employ more than 2,500 people.

chip production a statewide priority in 2023, New York Governor Hochul announced the creation of the Governor's Office of Semiconductor Expansion, Manufacturing, and Integration (GO-SEMI), a visionary \$45 million investment. In addition, companies can tap into \$10 billion in economic incentives from the state for environmentally friendly "Green CHIPS" semiconductor manufacturing and supply chain projects.

A Dutchess County location allows companies easy access to NY CREATES Albany NanoTech Complex—where more than \$20 billion in investments has created the largest and most advanced publicly owned semiconductor R&D facil-

ity in North America and the world's only open access 300mm R&D facility.

A Smart, Skilled Workforce. Home to 1.2 million highly skilled workers in the Hudson Valley and more than 30 colleges and universities in the mid-Hudson Region, the area offers a deep talent pool with more than 1,600 people employed in Dutchess County's semiconductor industry.

And a \$3 million investment in a state-of-the-art Mechatronics Lab at Dutchess Community College underscores the county's commitment to fostering innovation and workforce development.

Visit www.thinkdutchess.com for more information. 

Overcoming The Obstacles



PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK / SITTINAN

BY KYLE PESCHLER

CHANGING
CONDITIONS ARE
CHALLENGING
LOGISTICS, AND
COMPANIES ARE
MAKING DECISIONS TO
MEET THE MOMENT.

With uncertain times looming over, the logistics industry has seen its share of difficulty when it comes to transportation and distribution of products. While shippers and freights have experienced hardship in the past few years, the advancements in technology are starting to show a brighter picture, allowing for products to be transported globally with ease.

Based on Council of Supply Chain Professionals' "Annual State of Logistics Report for 2024", forwarding, 3PL, ports, air, parcel, and macroeconomics were just some aspects of logistics that had obstacles to overcome this year.

The global economy will experience slow growth until new economic engines are found and investment calculus is solved. High interest rates and inflation continue to exert drag globally, geopolitical instability and trade fragmentation will continue to create disruptions. Finally nearshoring will counterbalance toward stability in global supply chains.

Freight demands are expected to rise. Shippers are taking advantage of the lower freight rates and service reliability related to ocean services. As a result, some major ocean carriers are adding air capacity of their own to fill out their end-to-end logistics networks.

For the remainder of this year, large shippers are turning away from "single sourcing" due to falling parcel volume and intensified carrier competition. Shippers are seeking a more diversified carrier base and maturing rate shopping capabilities. Shippers have started to rethink value of speed and optimize as needed for their product-centric customer experi-

LOCATIONS FOR THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY

ence, mixing regional carriers and USPS together.

Third party logistics (3PL) faces significant challenges such as low freight rates and excess capacity. These challenges could lead to further consolidation among smaller players and those dependent on venture capital funding. Different 3PLs and shippers are testing different models to participate in the market, with asset-light 3PLs expanding into asset-heavy spaces. Shippers have begun marketing their internal logistical capabilities externally.

The freight forwarding sector has been burdened with weaker global demand levels, excess carrier capacity, ongoing labor shortage, and heightened geopolitical uncertainty. With these issues, forwarders are shifting gears and creating long-term client stickiness through scale-based advantage in rates, routing optionality and flexibility, and better supply chain visibility.

With downturn in consumer demand after the pandemic has left carriers with a stubborn surplus of capacity, freight demand, and plunge in rates. Until there is an increase in rebuilding of retail and business inventories, improvement in consumer sentiment and housing market index, and cut rates, there won't be a balance of power to change transportation assets. Technology companies have begun to turn focus and AI capabilities to optimize transportation mix and better utilize assets.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS: CROSSROADS FOR NATIONAL TRADE

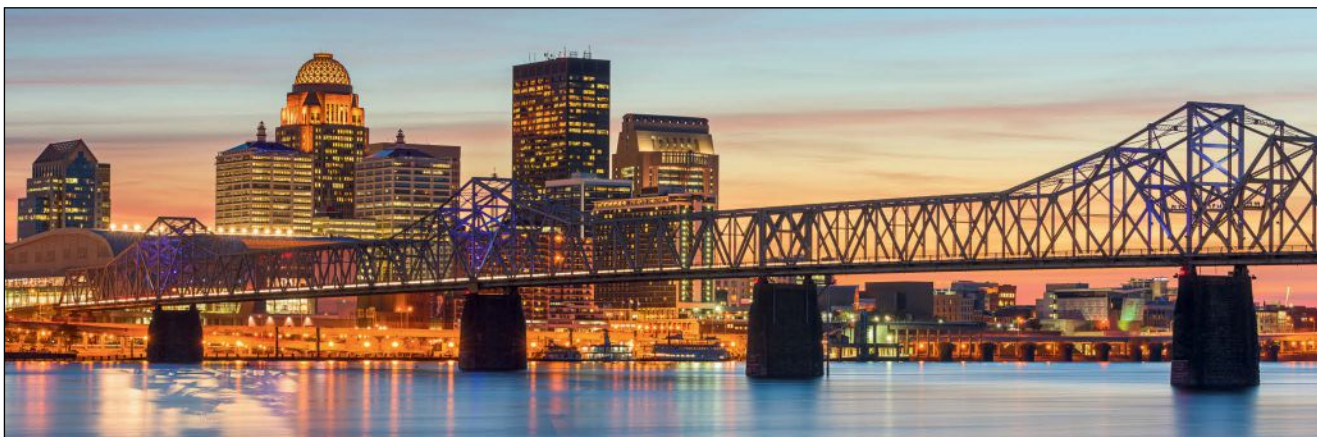
Southern Illinois' strategic location in the heart of the United States makes it a natural crossroads for national and international trade. Its proximity to major metropolitan areas such as Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, and Nashville means

businesses have easy access to a broad market. This central location reduces transportation time and costs, allowing companies to efficiently reach their customers and suppliers.

"Southern Illinois is centrally located near several major Midwestern cities and has excellent roads for transportation which makes it an ideal location for our business," says Keith Dickens, President of Pepsi Midamerica.

Known collectively as the R4 Advantage, the transportation network in Southern Illinois encompasses roads, railways, rivers, and runways. This multifaceted infrastructure provides businesses with multiple options for moving goods, enhancing flexibility and reliability in supply chain management.

Roads: Southern Illinois is crisscrossed by three Interstate highways, allowing freight to move in every direction. Interstates 57, 64, and 24 connect the



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“Known collectively as the R4 Advantage, the transportation network in Southern Illinois encompasses roads, railways, rivers, and runways.”

region to key markets across the country. Located within five hours of eight major cities, and a two-day trucking distance to over 80% of the U.S. population, these highways facilitate swift and efficient ground transportation.

Railways: Five Class I railways in Southern Illinois offer robust freight services crucial for industries such as manufacturing, agriculture, and mining. The region is



Southern Illinois has been the crossroads for national trade with roads, railways, rivers, and runways positioned throughout the region.

served by Union Pacific, BNSF, Canadian National, CSX, and Norfolk Southern, providing the ability for rail access to each corner of the U.S. market with minimal switching.

Rivers: The Mississippi and Ohio Rivers converge in Southern Illinois, with 80% of all inland barge traffic passing through the region. Over 10 million tons are shipped through Southern Illinois ports each year.



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LOCATIONS FOR THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY

Historically, coal made up the bulk of this tonnage, but in recent years, grain, fertilizer, coiled steel, scrubber stone, and gypsum have become more common items shipped by barge.

Runways: While the logistics of moving goods are world-class in Southern Illinois, moving people is also a regional specialty. Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois offers commercial jet service to and from Chicago O'Hare daily. Southern Illinois Airport has grown into an economic driver. Companies such as Crucial MRO have relocated to take advantage of the region's central location and Southern Illinois University's top-ranked School of Aviation.

"The farm-based, let's just get the work done mentality. This is what I still see today in our workforce," says Nik Peace, Plant Manager at Continental Tire.

A key element of Southern Illinois' success is its skilled and dedicated workforce.

The region is home to a top research institution in Southern Illinois University Carbondale. The region's five community colleges offer certifications and two-year training programs custom-tailored to a company's needs.

The cost of doing business in Southern Illinois is lower compared to larger metropolitan areas. Real estate, labor, and operational costs are more affordable, allowing businesses to maximize their investments and improve profitability. These cost advantages, combined with the region's transportation and logistics strengths, create a compelling case for businesses to establish and grow their operations in Southern Illinois.

Visit SouthernIllinoisNow.org for more information.

OLYMPIC VIEW INDUSTRIAL PARK IN BREMERTON, WASHINGTON

The Olympic View Industrial Park (OVIP), located in Bremerton, Washing-

"Olympic View Industrial Park offers the best of both worlds in Kitsap County's affordable and beautiful area, while maintaining an advantageous industry edge."

ton, is one of the largest industrial parks in the state outside of a major city, i.e., Seattle or Tacoma. With hundreds of acres of developable land, OVIP caters to a variety of companies—whether one acre for a mom-and-pop shop or 25 acres for a manufacturing facility. You will be in good company with businesses like SAFE



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Olympic View Industrial Park

PHOTO: SANK HAMERS/PORT OF BREMERTON

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Boats, Inventech Marine Solutions, General Dynamics Electric Boat, and more.

Olympic View Industrial Park offers the best of both worlds in Kitsap County's affordable and beautiful area while maintaining an advantageous industry edge via a foreign trade zone, on-site railroad access, and adjacent airport (Bremerton National Airport with a 6,000-foot runway). Notably, the rail connections connect the property to the Port of Grays Harbor via the Puget Sound & Pacific (PSAP), which also connects to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) and Union Pacific mainlines. Sites at OVIP offer shovel-ready properties with water, sewage, fiber optics, and other amenities available, as well as land leases that include favorable environmental standards.

Moreover, Kitsap County is known for its skilled workforce, allowing companies to thrive through expansion or just beginning. Located close to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and a variety of



Olympic View Industrial Park in Bremerton, Washington features rail access and a nearby airport.

colleges, including Olympic College which maintains a favorable welding program, this region is equipped to handle large-scale operations.

Olympic View Industrial Park is owned and operated by the Port of Bremerton, a well-regarded organization

(Continued on page 98)

Southern Illinois

Central Transportation & Distribution Hub

17-County Site Inventory

Priority Energy Communities Region for Federal Programs

- ✓ **LOGISTICS INFRASTRUCTURE:** 3 Interstate Highways & 5 Class I Railroads
- ✓ **INLAND PORTS:** Mississippi & Ohio Rivers; Route for 80% of U.S. Inland Barge Traffic
- ✓ **CENTRAL:** Within 5 Hours Driving Distance To 8 Major Cities; 1 Hour Flight to Chicago
- ✓ **SITES:** Large & Small Existing Buildings Available; Sites 250+ Acres Available
- ✓ **LABOR FORCE:** 400,000+ within 50 miles; 1 MILLION+ within 75 miles
- ✓ **WORKFORCE TRAINING:** 5 Community Colleges, Employer-Specific Training Options, Top Research University - Southern Illinois University Carbondale
- ✓ **COST OF LIVING:** 12% Below U.S. Average
- ✓ **QUALITY OF LIFE:** Shawnee National Forest, 9 State Parks, 10+ Lakes, 100+ Miles of Bike Trails



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BY NORA CALEY

FORWARD
MOVEMENT IN
THE ELECTRIC
VEHICLE INDUSTRY
IS PUSHING
GROWTH, DESPITE A
SLOWDOWN IN SOME
RESPECTS.

Observers of the electric vehicle industry could use several automotive metaphors to describe the state of the electric vehicle (EV) business—roadblocks, speedbumps, detours—but in reality, EVs are gaining traction. The number of EVs available is increasing, as companies are developing new models. Also on the plus side: charging infrastructure is improving, and consumers are considering buying EVs.

In June, BloombergNEF's "Long-Term Electric Vehicle Outlook (EVO)" showed that EV adoption is still growing, despite the mixed near-term outlook. The report indicates that rapidly falling battery prices, advancements in next-generation battery technology, and improving relative economics of electric vehicles with internal-combustion engine counterparts continue to underpin long-term EV growth globally. Still, the report indicates that the window to reach global net-zero transport ambitions is now narrower than ever.

According to Edmunds, which cites the "Experian Automotive Market Trends Report," in Q4 2023 there were about 3.3 million electric cars on the road in the United States. That's up from two million in 2022, and 1.3 million in 2021. While these figures are relatively small compared to the other 288.5 million cars on the road, the future looks promising for consumers and manufacturers. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) predicts that by 2030 there could be 30 million to 42 million EVs on U.S. roads.

The U.S. Department of Energy, through its Alternative Fuels Data Center, tracks and shares data on public and private non-residential alternative fueling stations. In Q4 2023, the report found there was a 5% increase in the number of EV charging ports, including a 5.2% increase in public ports and a 3.5% increase in private ports. DC fast charging ports increased by the greatest percentage (9.2%). The Southeast region had the largest increase in public charging in Q4 (7.8%), with California leading the country in number of available public charging ports.

PHOTO: ADRIAN STOCK / TERENY



MADE IN ALABAMA. POWERED IN BIBB COUNTY.

Mercedes-Benz has built luxury cars in Alabama for 25 years. Now, they're building an all-electric, carbon-neutral future here. Starting in a state-of-the-art battery factory in Bibb County, high-performance lithium-ion batteries are prepared for production of the EQE and EQS SUVs in Tuscaloosa. The electric evolution is coming straight from rural Alabama.

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For more info, visit [BusinessFacilities.com/location-info](https://www.BusinessFacilities.com/location-info)

LOCATIONS FOR THE ELECTRIC VEHICLES/SUPPLIERS INDUSTRY

Another factor that points to future growth is that prices of EVs are improving. A report from Kelley Blue Book noted that the average transaction price for EVs was \$56,520 in July 2024, compared to \$48,401 for gas-powered vehicles. In the U.S., the federal government offers qualified buyers of EVs a \$7,500 tax credit for select new fully electric and plug-in hybrids, further decreasing the sales price.

Manufacturers are developing models that appeal to these consumers and building facilities to meet demand. Here are some regions that are attracting EV manufacturers and suppliers.

ALABAMA: SUPPORT SYSTEM ACCELERATES AUTOMAKERS INTO EV ERA

In Alabama, the auto industry is making major moves to capitalize on the evolution towards electric vehicles—and it's getting plenty of support to accelerate new production strategies. Mercedes-Benz and Hyundai have already begun building EVs at their Alabama assembly plants, and Mercedes has opened a sprawling battery factory in the state. Meanwhile, a growing EV-focused supply chain is taking shape across Alabama. Altogether, more than \$2 billion in new EV-related investments in the state have been announced, setting the stage for the creation of 2,500 jobs in Alabama's auto sector.

The increasing EV activity signals that Alabama's auto sector is fully concentrating on tomorrow, according to Ellen McNair, Secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce. "Alabama's auto industry has long been a dynamic growth engine for the state's economy, and I'm confident that it will be ready for its next chapter as the EV evolution continues to reshape automakers' strategies," McNair said. "Our auto manufacturing sector boasts some serious horsepower, and it's just getting started in this new age for the industry."

The industry is finding it has a strong support system in Alabama as it moves toward an EV future.

AIDT, Alabama's primary workforce development agency, is completing construction on a \$30 million workforce training center in Decatur that's dedicated to electric vehicles and emerging technologies. The 40,000-square-foot facility is located on the campus of the Alabama Robotics Technology Park, a \$73 million complex where AIDT helps companies train workers on advanced R&D and manufacturing technologies.

"Our main goal is to help the state's automakers continue to grow during the transition to electric powertrains and assist them as they embrace new technologies that are evolving all the time," said AIDT Director Ed Castile. "We just

want to make sure we have a workforce with the ability to thrive in this new environment."

Another resource is the Alabama Mobility and Power (AMP) Center in Tuscaloosa, which is supporting Alabama's automotive industry through research and innovation in the EV space. The AMP Center is a world-class research and development hub for creating and sustaining modern mobility and power technologies, developing charging infrastructure, and managing power delivery to support large-scale growth in electric vehicles. The center was founded through a partnership between The University of Alabama, Alabama Power, and Mercedes-Benz U.S. International (MBUSI) to create a premier research and development hub for electric vehicle and mobility innovation.

"The innovative thinking and collaboration that we see happening within the walls of the AMP Center can be transformative in advancing research and development in the electric vehicle technology and market," said Federico Kochlowski, President and CEO of MBUSI, the automaker's Alabama operation.

"The Mercedes-Benz collaboration with the AMP Center and its workforce development and training components underscores our commitment to fostering the next generation of leaders in the tech space," he added. "We look forward to the development that will come about from this partnership."

visit www.MadeInAlabama for more information.

ARKANSAS: THE ROAD TO SECURE LITHIUM SUPPLY

Businesses have an opportunity to get in early on the next big thing: America's lithium boom. In Arkansas, a new industry is rapidly picking up steam amid a global demand for lithium, a key element in powering modern lithium-ion batteries used in EVs, smartphones, grid-scale storage, and other products. Demand for lithium has soared as EV production has ramped up, and Arkansas has become a hotspot for



Mercedes-Benz launched production of its first Alabama-made EV, the EQS luxury SUV, in 2022, and later began producing another EV, the EQE, at the Tuscaloosa County plant.

PHOTO: MERCEDES-BENZ

lithium production due to its abundant reserves, making it the ideal location for EV and EV-adjacent industries.

The epicenter of lithium production is the Smackover Formation, a limestone aquifer that extends across the southern United States from Texas to Florida. Companies have taken notice of Arkansas' lithium resources and are locating facilities in south Arkansas to extract lithium-rich brine. These companies include major industry players like ExxonMobil, Standard Lithium, Equinor, Albemarle, Tetra Technologies, TerraVolta Resources, and LANXESS.

Arkansas offers multiple advantages for companies looking to invest in lithium. South Arkansas has a history of brine processing and an established infrastructure for lithium production, as well as a mature regulatory framework. Lithium operations benefit from Arkansas' low-cost electrical power, water resources, and communities and stakeholders that support the sector. There is a highly skilled workforce in the region with a talent pool supported by local universities and community colleges that provide industry-related degrees and workforce development programs.

Recent years have seen major investments in Arkansas' lithium industry. Albemarle announced a pilot facility for lithium production at its West Plant near Magnolia in 2024—two years after announcing a \$618 million expansion project to build supply and injection wells, invest in brine productivity, and hire 100 new employees.

ExxonMobil acquired rights to 120,000 gross acres in the region in 2023 and announced plans to use direct lithium extraction (DLE) to separate lithium from saltwater drilled from reservoirs beneath the surface. ExxonMobil has completed its appraisal drilling phase, drilling eight wells. The company is targeting 2027 for its first lithium production with plans to produce enough lithium by 2030 to supply the manufacturing needs of more than one million electric vehicles.

Standard Lithium commissioned the largest continuously operating DLE equipment in North America and installed a commercial-scale DLE column near El Dorado in 2024. In May 2024, Standard Lithium announced a partnership with Equinor to accelerate the development of its Arkansas brine projects. In September 2024, SWA Lithium LLC, a jointly owned subsidiary of Standard Lithium and Equinor was awarded \$225 million from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Awareness of Arkansas' lithium resources is quickly ramping up. The *Wall Street Journal* spotlighted Magnolia, Arkansas in a July 20, 2023 article entitled, "This Arkansas Town Could Become the Epicenter of a U.S. Lithium Boom."

In February 2024, a coalition of state agencies and lithium companies hosted the Arkansas Lithium Innovation Summit in Little Rock. This two-day conference brought industry executives, investors, and entrepreneurs together to learn about the opportunities available in Arkansas.

As the need for battery-powered and renewable energy technologies increases, lithium will continue to be a highly sought-after resource. Arkansas has become a central hub in the search for this valuable element and is attracting increased investment from the industry, driven by the state's competitive business environment, strong workforce, and abundant resources. The road to North America's secure lithium sup-

ply runs through Arkansas.

Visit <https://info.ArkansasEDC.com/lithium> for more information.

FULLY CHARGED: LOUISIANA RESOURCES ENERGIZE EV BATTERY SUPPLY

Global demand for electric vehicles has skyrocketed in recent years, accounting for nearly one in five cars sold in 2023. With demand projected to increase, U.S. auto manufacturers are moving quickly to establish a domestic supply chain for battery components that were previously sourced entirely from overseas providers.

No state is better positioned to capitalize than Louisiana. In a fast-moving market, it's the only state that can look investors in the eye and say: "No waiting." Here's why:

- ♦ **Chemical manufacturing:** An established, expansive, and thriving sector delivers partnership opportunities and critical support, with many EV battery components already utilized in-state.
- ♦ **Logistics:** Streamlined supply chain transport through an advanced infrastructure network via the Mississippi River, six interstate highways, six Class 1 railroads, six deepwater ports, seven primary airports, and internationally through the Gulf of Mexico.
- ♦ **Workforce:** Large, existing pool of experienced engineers with process industry skills that are transferrable to the battery

(Continued on page 109)



The inaugural Arkansas Lithium Innovation Summit was held in Little Rock, Arkansas in February 2024.

BY BF EDITORS

TODAY'S MANUFACTURERS
REQUIRE TECH-FOCUSED
SKILLSETS.
EDUCATION AND
EMPLOYERS ARE
COLLABORATING TO
MEET THE NEED.

The growth of advanced manufacturing skillsets reflects the evolving landscape of the manufacturing industry, driven by technological advancements and increased demand for efficiency, and innovation. From technology knowledge and data analytics to engineering and design, companies and communities are actively focused on expanding this talent pipeline.

In December 2023, Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute began their sixth manufacturing talent study in more than two decades. Released in April, the 2024 "Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute Talent Study" found that the U.S. manufacturing industry may have a net need for as many as 3.8 million jobs by 2033. The study involved an online survey of more than 200 U.S. manufacturers, interviews with senior executives from across all sectors, and a collation of secondary data on labor supply and demand.

As highlighted by Deloitte and the Manufacturing Institute study, nearly four million manufacturing jobs are expected to need filling within a decade. Other findings highlighted that without significant changes, about half of those jobs (1.9 million) could go unfilled if workforce challenges are not addressed.



Expanding The STEM Talent Pipeline

Additionally, 65% of the study respondents said attracting and retaining talent is a primary business challenge.

The connection between manufacturing jobs and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education is significant.

Technical Skills: Many manufacturing jobs require a solid understanding of engineering principles, computer programming, and technical problem-solving, all of which are central components of STEM education.

Advanced Technologies: The manufacturing sector increasingly relies on automation, robotics, and advanced manufacturing techniques. A strong foundation in STEM allows workers to operate, maintain, and innovate these technologies.

Innovation and Design: STEM education fosters critical thinking and creativity, which are essential for designing new products and improving manufacturing processes.

Workforce Development: As the manufacturing industry evolves, there's

a growing need for a skilled workforce. STEM education can help bridge the gap between the skills needed and those possessed by job seekers.

Career Pathways: A background in STEM opens up diverse career opportunities in manufacturing, from engineering roles to quality control and data analysis.

The growth of advanced manufacturing skillsets is crucial for meeting the challenges of modern production environments and ensuring a skilled workforce ready for the future.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY AT MARION: LEADING WITH ENGINEERING TECH DEGREE

The Ohio State University at Marion has partnered with business and industry professionals to prepare students majoring in engineering technology to become the business-oriented, industry leaders in the Marion region, across the state of Ohio and beyond.

Ohio State's engineering technology bachelor's degree is one of the majors

PHOTO: ADDBESTOCK/FOOTARTIST



Engineering technology at Ohio State Marion and manufacturing **Partners in successful outcomes**

At Ohio State Marion we have strong relationships with nearby industry partners, such as Whirlpool Corporation, Honda of America, Sakamura USA, and POET Bioprocessing. These partnerships offer students the opportunity to build networks, find internships, mentorship opportunities, and career positions as leaders in area manufacturing. The results of the partnership make Marion, Ohio a desired location for new and expanding industries to connect with quality candidates to help lead the companies of today and tomorrow.



OhioMeansJobs.

Marion County
A proud partner of the
American Job Center network



WORKFORCE FOCUS: MANUFACTURING & STEM EDUCATION

offered by the university's nationally ranked College of Engineering but is exclusively available on Ohio State's regional campuses.

Now, four short years after establishing the major, new graduates are fulfilling specific needs for area manufacturers. The engineering technology degree program is designed to produce highly skilled graduates with comprehensive training in manufacturing engineering, preparing them for a wide range of responsibilities, including process optimization, production management, troubleshooting, and company representative roles.

The need for these graduates is being driven by a resurgence of manufacturing—Ohio's largest economic sector, and has increased demand for college graduates with this combination of skills.

According to the Director of Marion's economic development organization Marion CAN DO!, Gus Comstock, the benefit of having a regional campus of an internationally recognized university right in Marion, Ohio is a huge competitive advantage to regional businesses and industries.

Assistant Professor of Practice in Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering,

Dr. Nima Mansouri, said, "Providing a direct connection to curriculum, Marion County and Ohio, being industrial hubs, has a significant demand for a skilled workforce, particularly in manufacturing. This region requires a new generation of well-educated engineers to meet its industrial needs. By equipping students with the latest knowledge in manufacturing, we are helping local industries remain competitive and lead the nation in the future of manufacturing."

Marion County Director of Ohio-Means Jobs, Roxanne Somerlot who works directly with area companies and business echoed the sentiment of Comstock: "The Ohio State University educates the full continuum of the talent pipeline for the most in-demand industries. Our local relationship with Ohio State results in proactive and effective training solutions for employers of any size and mission."

"Our industry partners have been involved from the very beginning, even during the curriculum development phase of this major," said Ohio State Marion's Capstone Coordinator Nima Mansouri. "Their insight into industry demands guided us in designing a cur-

riculum that meets those needs. Their involvement in engineering seminars, campus talks, and collaboration on Capstone courses help students deal real-world challenges they face," he said.

"A great example of the connection between business and industry is the Capstone Program with the Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology," said Comstock. "Companies can get an important project/problem completed or solved by a highly trained student/prospective employee with the backing of Ohio State's world-renowned engineering faculty."

"In the Capstone project, students team up with industry partners to tackle practical issues in manufacturing processes. They work collaboratively with industry professionals in developing solutions. This experience helps students to become familiar with real-world challenges and prepares them for their future careers," Mansouri elaborated.

"In the 2023-2024 academic year, our students partnered with the Whirlpool Corporation and Sakamura USA and completed three projects. This year, our students are collaborating with Honda and Sakamura on two new projects," Mansouri added.

Connecting engineering technology students with internationally recognized businesses and industries creates a win-win situation. For the students, it means real-world experience, networking opportunities, and a clearer path to future employment. For businesses and industries, it provides access to fresh talent, innovative ideas, and an avenue to shape the next generation of engineers who will drive their success. The collaboration fosters skill development and ensures that educational programs remain aligned with industry needs, ultimately benefiting both the students and the regional economy.

To learn more, visit marioncando.com, marionmeansjobs.com, and osumarion.osu.edu. 



At The Ohio State University at Marion, engineering technology majors have the opportunity to gain real-world experience with internationally recognized businesses.

PHOTO: THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY



ARIZONA'S BRIGHT FUTURE

BY KYLE PESCHLER

ACTIVITY IN EMERGING INDUSTRIES PROVE THE GRAND CANYON STATE IS INNOVATING ITSELF FOR NEXT GENERATIONS.

With a bright future ahead, Arizona encourages bold ideas and facilitates innovations. Arizona's is positioned to lead trends that further enhance the way industries do business. So far in Fiscal Year 2024, Arizona attracted record capital investment and jobs.

On July 30, 2024, the Arizona Commerce Authority reported that "Arizona economic development efforts continued to set a new standard of excellence and build on the state's economic momentum in Fiscal Year 2024. In the 12-month fiscal period that ended on

June 30, 2024, the Arizona Commerce Authority and local economic development agencies successfully worked with companies that committed to creating a projected 24,251 new jobs in the state with an average wage of \$75,701. Those companies also committed to investing more than \$50 billion in local communities—setting records for jobs, capital investment and wages."

During this time period, workforce development, startup growth, supply chain enhancements, and rural business expansions saw substantial wins. The fiscal year results show 121% of Arizona's projected jobs goal, 128% of its projected wages goal, and 1,250% of projected capex goal were achieved. This activity spanned the state, with activities across metro regions as well as smaller communities.

"Arizona has become a global hub for advanced manufacturing and emerging technologies, with no signs of slowing down," said Sandra Watson, President and CEO of the Arizona Commerce Authority. "As the home of America's semiconductor resurgence, Arizona continues to attract global companies in advanced industries.

These wins translate to high-paying jobs for Arizonians and increased opportunities for Arizona small businesses and local manufacturers, and they are supported by our top-ranked workforce and leading education institutions."

In November 2023, the state announced a set of actions aimed at innovating the semiconductor workforce, increasing opportunities for apprenticeships while supporting workers and families. Some of these programs include.

- ♦ Arizona's first Registered Apprenticeship Program supporting the semiconductor industry. NXP Semiconductors started an Industrial Manufacturing Technician occupation. NXP provided on the job learning along with covering apprentice tuition costs.
- ♦ The Arizona Commerce Authority invested \$4 million in funds to support Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the semiconductor industry. Costs that were covered included tuition books, materials, supplies for apprentices, and support services such as transportation and childcare.
- ♦ A Semiconductor Task Force, Employer Collaborative was set up to promote

the use and development of apprenticeship programs.

- ♦ The Maricopa Future48 Workforce Accelerator was launched, with Governor Katie Hobbs announcing a partnership with Maricopa Community Colleges. The governor launched the Future48 Workforce Accelerators in 2023 to provide customized, industry-led training in advanced manufacturing sectors. Training at the facility in Maricopa County will take place in close collaboration with semiconductor industry partners. The new facility represents the third of six Future48 Workforce Accelerators. The first two included partnerships in Yuma, with Arizona Western College, and Kingman, with Mohave Community College, targeting aerospace and solar.

ARIZONA COMMERCE AUTHORITY SUPERCHARGING INNOVATION

Innovation thrives in Arizona. Arizona is at the forefront of innovation—providing an unparalleled environment for entrepreneurs to succeed. Known for its welcoming environment, Arizona provides fertile ground for companies of all stages—from early-stage ventures to experienced entrepreneurs—to thrive.

Arizona has established a reputation as a leading destination for companies to

test, launch, and scale new ideas and business models. The state has implemented first-in-the nation, forward-thinking policies to support emerging technologies, sending a signal to businesses that innovation is welcome there.

As Arizona's leading economic development organization, the Arizona Commerce Authority (ACA) has prioritized advancing the state's startup ecosystem alongside efforts to attract and grow base industries. This steadfast commitment includes a comprehensive suite of programs that support startups during all stages.

New ACA innovation programs supercharge startups. In August 2024, the ACA announced plans to scale the highly successful Arizona Innovation Challenge (AIC) program, helping more Arizona startups find success.

The AIC, a program of the ACA and one of the nation's largest business plan competitions, was launched in 2011 to identify and accelerate support for Arizona's most promising startups. Since then, 140 AIC awardees have been selected as awardees, representing a combined portfolio value of more than \$5.8 billion.

Through three new and enhanced venture programs—Venture Scale, Venture Raise, and Venture Start—the ACA will extend more one-on-one support to Arizona startups.

Venture Scale connects up to 10 AIC Awardees with serial entrepreneurs, high-level executives, and subject matter experts through a six-month, customized regimen. The program represents Arizona's flagship accelerator program for the state's most promising startups. For Venture Scale, participating entrepreneurs have a number of chances to improve their pitches and hone their business strategies.

AIC Semifinalists and Finalists who do not become AIC Awardees will be invited to participate in Venture Raise, a 12-week accelerator that focuses on funding options, investor pitching, startup financial health, and more. Venture Start will be targeted toward early-stage startups, connecting them with mentors to improve their business plans and help them prepare to enter and succeed in business plan competitions such as the Arizona Innovation Challenge.

Plug and Play accelerateAZ. In addition to the ACA's suite of innovation programs, Plug and Play accelerateAZ, a program of the ACA, was launched to connect startups with industry leaders. Plug and Play accelerateAZ currently features two programs in manufacturing and sustainability.

For more information about Arizona's work to drive innovation, visit www.azcommerce.com/start-up/.

WINSLOW, AZ: MAJOR GROWTH ON THE HORIZON

The City of Winslow is primed for new development as Arizona continues to be one of the best states to conduct business. Winslow is located in the northeastern portion of Arizona along Interstate 40. With a commercial airport and direct access to the BNSF Railway, Winslow is a logistical haven for businesses that rely on the efficient movement of goods and products. With access to a labor force of more than 70,000 employees within a 60-minute drive, Winslow not only has the physical assets for growth, but the human assets as well. The City has several major developments on the horizon including the creation of a 1,500-



Plug and Play accelerate AZ celebrated the launch of the Arizona office in April 2023 in Phoenix.

PHOTO: ARIZONA COMMERCE AUTHORITY

Businesses aren't the only thing we scale.



Bold and exciting advancements are happening in the Grand Canyon state. Cutting-edge companies are launching, testing and scaling new technologies in Arizona. Our culture of innovation, highly skilled talent, lean regulatory environment, and affordable operating costs provide an ideal platform for business growth and success. The state has announced investment from industry leaders including Benchmark Electronics, JA Solar, LG Energy Solution, Lucid, Virgin Galactic, TSMC and more. Ranked top five for largest growing state, it's clear why people are flocking here. Beyond being a place where you can achieve your professional goals, Arizona provides an unmatched lifestyle that allows you to achieve your personal goals. It's this perfect balance that makes life better here.

ARIZONA
COMMERCE AUTHORITY

azcommerce.com

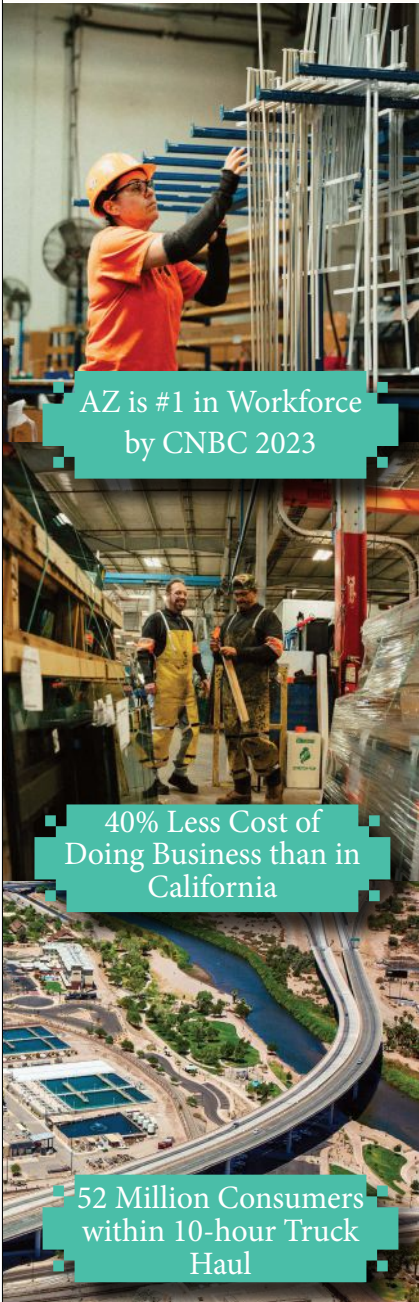
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AZ is #1 in Workforce
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Doing Business than in
California

52 Million Consumers
within 10-hour Truck
Haul

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STATE FOCUS: ARIZONA

acre industrial park, extensive infrastructure enhancements to improve the I-40 trade port corridor, and a new housing incentive to further encourage growth.

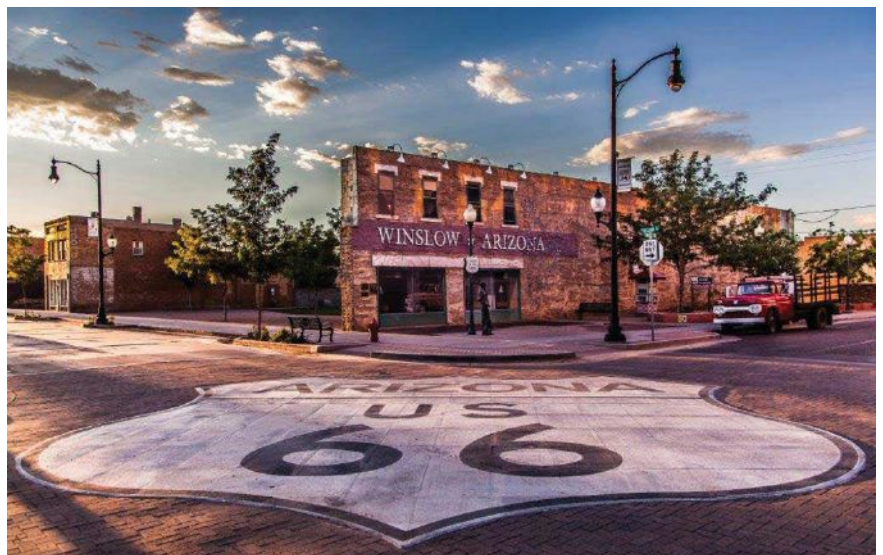
A 1,500-acre planned area development (PAD) has been submitted to the City for review to facilitate the creation of this state-of-the-art industrial park, which will be located on the south side of Winslow. Atlas Global, the master developer behind the plan, has gained the necessary zoning approvals and are closing in on final project approval for the project (Q1 2025). Several infrastructure improvement projects are already occurring to better support a wide range of potential businesses and their utility needs. Atlas and the city of Winslow aim to attract manufacturers, energy producers, and other industrial/commercial businesses to locate within this park.

Additionally, the city of Winslow has worked with several partners along the I-40 to create a new trade coalition to strengthen the already excellent logistics in the region. Major partners include the City of Albuquerque (NM), the City of Kingman (AZ), and Global Logistics Development Partners (GLD) to expand existing infrastructure and create mod-

ern logistic hubs to support a variety of industries. Winslow recently received federal funding via a RAISE grant (\$4.1 million) to further assist with these endeavors and to expand vital transportation infrastructure that will be an asset for businesses locating along the I-40.

Lastly, the city of Winslow recently approved a novel housing incentive to help spur the creation of new housing and apartment complexes. The incentive may reimburse or waive up to 100% of city development fees to any developer that reserves a portion of their units (20%) for workforce housing. This incentive hopes to accelerate the development of dwelling units that will be vital to ensure the arrival of businesses that bring meaningful job creation to the region. Northern Arizona's housing demand is expected to be over 17,000 new dwelling units within the next five years.

Winslow is on the precipice of major growth that has not been seen for more than 50 years. With relatively inexpensive and abundant swaths of land, major logistical advantages, and access to plentiful natural resources, Winslow is an economic tinderbox ready to ignite. With several major projects already on the



Downtown Winslow, AZ, where new development will take place for businesses to move into, creating a work-life balance.

PHOTO: CITY OF WINSLOW

way, Winslow is excited to state they are "Open for Business".

Visit www.winslowaz.gov/page/economic-development for more information.

THE FUTURE OF SPACE INNOVATION IS IN SIERRA VISTA, AZ

Once known for stories of the bold people who pushed forward America's frontier, Sierra Vista now beckons to those pushing the boundaries of space innovation. Home to two state-of-the-art colleges and an Army installation helping to chart the military's future, Sierra Vista is well-positioned for the next giant leap forward, becoming a spaceport reentry site in 2026.

Sierra Vista is currently pursuing steps towards an FAA Spaceport Reentry Site License at its municipal airport, positioning



The night skyline of Sierra Vista, AZ, where both the Army and private companies are developing the technology needed for space innovation.

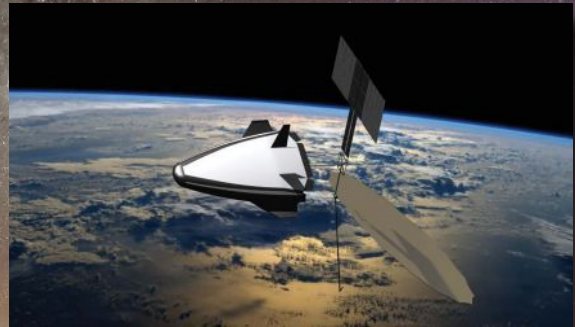
the city to be one of only three spaceport reentry sites in the nation. This future-focused site will soon be welcoming BlackStar Orbital, which committed to building a facility there for the development and

manufacture of the company's innovative spaceplane-satellite hybrid.

BlackStar's next generation space drone is capable of a wide range of mission functions, including intelligence, surveillance, and

PHOTO: WWW.SIERRAVISTA.AZ.GOV

The Future of Innovation is Here



Sierra Vista beckons to those pushing the boundaries of space innovation. With shovel-ready real estate and apron frontage at its soon-to-be spaceport reentry site featuring 12,001 feet of runway, this is a great place to land your business. Access to Arizona's robust space industry and Sierra Vista's highly educated, tech-centric workforce make this the place to be.

SierraVistaAZBusiness.com (520) 439-2184



For more info, visit BusinessFacilities.com/location-info

reconnaissance, as well as low earth orbit communications that enhance military capabilities, operational effectiveness, and strategic communication.

"We're thrilled to welcome BlackStar Orbital and break into the space economy," says City of Sierra Vista Tourism and Economic Development Director Tony Boone. "Space-enabled research and development has a variety of benefits for a wide range of stakeholders, including our partners on Fort Huachuca."

Sierra Vista also leverages extraordinary educational opportunities and a highly trained and, tech-centric workforce ready to meet the challenges of tomorrow. The city is home to Cochise College and University of Arizona's College of Applied Science & Technology. It's also home to Fort Huachuca, the U.S. Army's hub of technology, training, and testing. The military installation has a long history of unmanned aerial systems and testing, and the Department of Defense already conducts multi-domain operations locally. Each year, around 700 soldiers transition through Fort Huachuca and enter the civilian workforce.

Meanwhile, the State of Arizona is

already a leader in the global space industry with industry across the state collaborating to make Arizona a premier space hub. The state boasts a dynamic space ecosystem that includes over 1,250 supply chain contributors, launch services, validation, component testing, space situational awareness, and mining. Plus, with Yuma pursuing a license as a launch site, there is no better time to land in Sierra Vista's growing space economy.

As a center for education and defense, Sierra Vista enjoys a stable economy and fiscally conservative leadership. These key attributes contribute to the city's low tax rate. Add that to the affordable cost of living and extraordinary lifestyle amenities to find a destination worth short-listing. Located about an hour southeast of Tucson International Airport, and 30 minutes south of I-10, Sierra Vista offers the amenities of a large city without the traffic, crime, or commute.

Situated amid soaring mountain peaks, Sierra Vista also enjoys a higher elevation and more moderate temperatures ideal for year-round outdoor recreation and special events. Paved multi-use paths, parks, an indoor water park, and world-class sporting

facilities are the extra amenities that elevate Sierra Vista's quality of life.

Learn more about Sierra Vista's business opportunities at www.sierravistaaz.gov

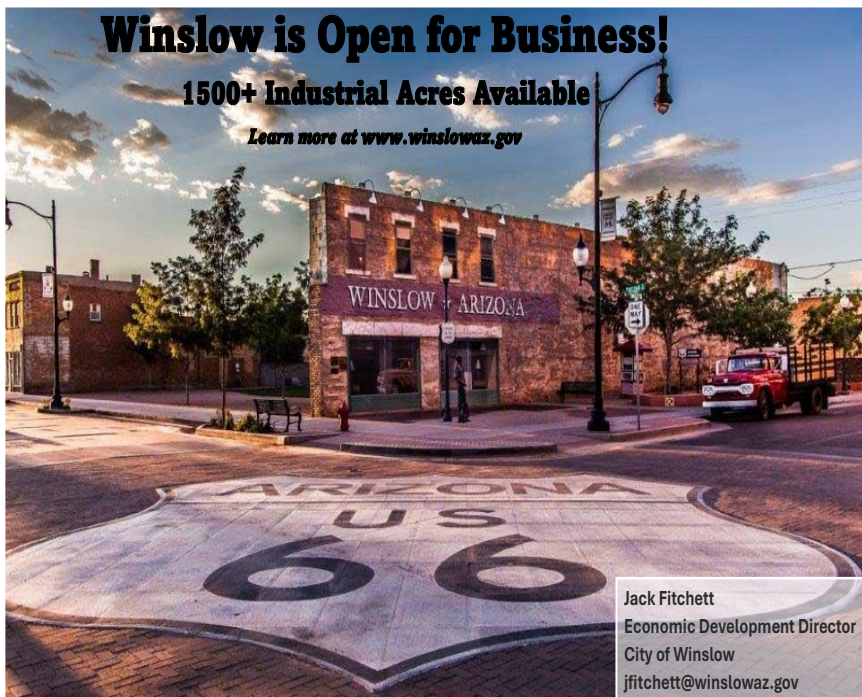
MARICOPA, AZ: THRIVING ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE

The City of Maricopa, Arizona is situated approximately 17 miles south of Phoenix and has swiftly transformed into a vibrant community, drawing both residents and businesses. This growth is driven by strategic initiatives, a business-friendly environment, strong infrastructure, and the availability of land, water, and power, positioning Maricopa as a significant player in the region's economic development.

Diverse Economic Landscape. Maricopa is positioned to diversify its economic base with the addition of a master-planned business and industrial park. The city's streamlined permitting processes have made it an attractive destination for businesses. Additionally, Maricopa's strategic location near major transportation routes, such as Interstates 8 and 10, State Route 347, Union Pacific Railroad's main line, and the Port of Phoenix, has fostered a burgeoning logistics and distribution industry, allowing companies to optimize supply chains and reduce transportation costs.

Significant Expansion Projects. Maricopa is riding a wave of new business locations and expansion projects, including the city's 1,000+ acre master-planned, rail-served industrial park, a key development drawing companies in manufacturing, distribution, and logistics and further elevating Maricopa's economic profile. Other notable project sites include a planned 2,100-acre area of innovation, a 481-acre multi-use industrial park, and a 189-acre planned area development. These developments highlight Maricopa's commitment to fostering innovation and supporting economic growth. Retail, healthcare, and hospitality sectors are also expanding, enhancing the city's appeal and creating jobs.

Business Incentives. To maintain its growth, Maricopa and its partners have



Winslow is Open for Business!
1500+ Industrial Acres Available
Learn more at www.winslowaz.gov

Jack Fitchett
Economic Development Director
City of Winslow
jfitchett@winslowaz.gov

For more info, visit BusinessFacilities.com/location-info



Aerial view of the City of Maricopa, AZ, a growing community for both businesses and residents.

implemented a range of incentives aimed at attracting and retaining businesses and has a history of finding solutions that create a path to success. The city's Office of Economic Opportunity also facilitates site selection, workforce training, and financing, ensuring businesses have the resources needed for success.

Most Maricopa sites offer the benefits

of a Foreign Trade Zone designation, which according to the U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration, is a designated location in the United States where companies can use special procedures that help encourage U.S. activity by allowing delayed or reduced duty payments on foreign merchandise as well as other savings.

Infrastructure Investments. Maricopa's growth is underpinned by substantial investments in infrastructure. The city completed the initial phase of the Sonoran Desert Parkway, a multi-phase high-capacity corridor designed to directly connect Maricopa to Casa Grande and I-10, creating a thriving industrial corridor, increased housing opportunities, and potential job growth. The city has also committed to a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) with more than \$691 million allocated to infrastructure improvements.

Strategic Partnerships. Maricopa's success is bolstered by strong partnerships with multiple organizations. Collaborations with master developers, regional and state agencies, and local organizations and stakeholders have been vital in attracting investment, securing grants, and promoting economic

(Continued on page 99)

WE HAVE SPACE

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DAN GERACI, CEO of FreeFall Aerospace



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Image Credit: NASA, ESA, CSA, and STScI



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BY BF EDITORS

NEW ENGLAND COMPRISES
AN EDUCATED
WORKFORCE AND
INNOVATIVE RESOURCES
TO SUPPORT BUSINESSES
IN BOTH LEGACY AND
EMERGING INDUSTRIES.



Building On Strong Foundations

The New England region—consisting of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont—in the northeast corner of the United States, stands out for its exceptional industry diversity. The New England economy is comprised of traditional, reliable professions, such as those in education and healthcare, as well as dynamic, forward-thinking fields like technology and finance. The workforce and industry in this U.S. region exhibit versatility, catering to a spectrum of occupations, ranging from various educational backgrounds and across socio-economic strata. This diversity in jobs spans urban and rural environments.

Looking at data over 2023-24, this region has seen economic improvements ranging from employment to salaries, according to data from the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

The Federal Reserve Bank of Boston's "New England Economic Conditions" July 2024 report also found that employment grew at a year-over-year rate of 1% (as of May 2024), which was close to the rate observed before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Among all supersectors in New England, educational and health services had the highest growth rate, at more than

3%, from May 2023 to May 2024. By contrast, the information sector experienced a 3.7% decrease in employment.

New England's unemployment rate increased 0.4 percentage point from May 2023 to May 2024; still, at 3.4%, the regional rate was lower than the national rate of 4%. Noted the Federal Reserve report, the rate increase in New England was likely driven in part by a rise in labor force participation.

CONNECTICUT RISING

Connecticut's Commissioner of Economic and Community Development, Dan O'Keefe, said it best when he said, "Connecticut is having a moment."

The Constitution State is experiencing momentum across prominent indices and benchmarks that measure the health and competitiveness of a state economy. The third smallest state in the country leads its New England neigh-



Connecticut offers business a predictable operating environment with a stable political culture.

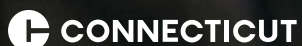
PHOTO: ANDREW STOCKFELT/PHOTO



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REGIONAL FOCUS: NEW ENGLAND

bors in social and economic factors that include:

- ◆ #1 most diverse state in New England (WalletHub, 2023)
- ◆ #1 most LGBTQ+ friendly state in New England (Out Leadership, 2024)
- ◆ #1 most academic bioscience R&D expenditures per capita in New England (TEconomy/BIO, 2022)
- ◆ #1 happiest state in New England (WalletHub, 2023)
- ◆ #1 in New England (and the U.S.) for personal and residential safety (WalletHub, 2023)

Connecticut is the fastest growing economy in the region for the second year in a row, has had a budget surplus for six consecutive years, and boasts a rainy-day fund that is maxed out at \$3.3 billion. The state's credit rating has been repeatedly upgraded since the pandemic, and the state offers companies a predictable operating environment with a stable political culture that includes cooperation and consensus across party lines, a rarity in the U.S. today.

The state has seen an uptick in its population and is led by a business-friendly and pragmatic governor, Ned Lamont. Governor Lamont has assembled an all-star economic development team which includes recently appointed Commissioner O'Keefe; Chief Manufacturing Officer Paul Lavoie; and John Bourdeaux, President and CEO of five-year-old economic development non-profit AdvanceCT.

"Connecticut is here to win the economic pole position in New England and the greater Northeast region," said Bourdeaux. "Our policies, operating environment, and critical economic indicators that companies look for as they make investment decisions are coming together under Governor Lamont."

"Connecticut offers predictability to our corporate investors; we offer a true partnership with government alongside one of the top workforces in the nation."

Connecticut's talent pool is one of the most educated in the United States, with rankings that include the following:

- ◆ 4th most educated state in the nation (WalletHub, 2024)
- ◆ #1 for college readiness in the United States (U.S. News & World Report, 2024)
- ◆ 3rd ranked community college system (WalletHub, 2024)
- ◆ #2 ranked public school system in the nation (WalletHub, 2024)

"We have a lot of positives to talk about with the companies looking at New England and the Northeast," added Bourdeaux. "We are competing for and winning foreign direct investment projects and sizeable U.S.-based investment from around the country."

Connecticut's recent momentum isn't something that happened overnight, but steadily over the past six years. The pandemic created a migration of families and companies that relocated to Connecticut for its high quality of life, that includes sea-to-ski activities, excellent schools, world-class health care, and other amenities that became especially important after Covid-19.

The pandemic also spurred significant reshoring in the manufacturing industry,

further benefiting Connecticut. Home to several large OEMs, companies in the supply chain of large manufacturers scrambled to set up operations closer to their largest customers.

Connecticut's "moment" is here, and its upward economic trajectory is making people rethink their view of New England.

Visit www.AdvanceCT.org for more information.

BANGOR, MAINE: WHERE BUSINESSES THRIVE

Bangor, Maine, offers a unique blend of advantages that make it an appealing choice for entrepreneurs. Nestled in the heart of Maine, the City of Bangor provides an advantageous mix of affordability, community support, and strategic positioning that can foster both growth and sustainability for new ventures.

Affordability and Cost of Living.

Unlike larger metropolitan areas, Bangor offers a lower cost of living with more affordable real estate, which can significantly reduce overhead costs for businesses, freeing up capital for other essential aspects of running a business.



Situated in the Penobscot River Valley, Bangor, Maine has access to major transportation routes.

PHOTO: CITY OF BANGOR

WE HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED RIGHT HERE.

BANGOR, MAINE: WHERE BUSINESS AND BEAUTY CONVERGE

Looking for the perfect location to fuel your company's expansion plans? Look no further than Bangor, Maine. Nestled in the heart of New England, our vibrant city offers a winning combination of economic opportunity, strategic advantages, and a high quality of life.

With its prime location, **Bangor provides easy access to major markets and transportation networks.** Situated at the crossroads of thriving economic corridors, our city connects your business to a wide network of customers and suppliers, paving the way for growth and success.

Beyond business, Bangor offers a remarkable quality of life. Immerse yourself in a vibrant arts and cultural scene, explore our pristine wilderness, and enjoy a strong sense of community. In Bangor, work-life balance is more than just a buzzword—it's a way of life.

Ready to unlock the potential of Bangor for your company's expansion? Contact us today and let our Community & Economic Development team guide you to success!



CITY OF
BANGOR

bangormaine.gov/ced

City of Bangor Community & Economic Development Office
73 Harlow Street, Bangor, ME 04401 | (207) 992-4280

For more info, visit BusinessFacilities.com/location-info

REGIONAL FOCUS: NEW ENGLAND

Community and Support. Bangor boasts a tight-knit community that is supportive of local businesses. The city's strong sense of community can translate into loyal customers and valuable networking opportunities. Organizations, such as the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce and UpStart Maine, actively support and promote local enterprises. These organizations provide resources, networking events, and advocacy to help businesses thrive.

Strategic Location. Situated in the Penobscot River Valley, Bangor is positioned with access to major transportation routes, including rail. It is a central hub close to cities like Portland, Maine and Boston, as well as Canadian cities. The Bangor International Airport handles freight, includes a foreign trade zone and offers convenient non-stop flight options for business and leisure travel.

Quality of Life. The city combines the charm of a small town coupled with outdoor amenities. Surrounded by beautiful landscapes, including forests, lakes, and the nearby Acadia National Park, Bangor offers a pleasant living environment contributing to a balanced lifestyle.

Economic Incentives. Bangor and the state of Maine provide economic incen-

tives for businesses, including tax incentives and grants. Maine's business-friendly programs support economic development and job creation. Bangor specifically offers incentives to attract and retain businesses, such as credit enhancement agreements, development grants, and low-interest loans.

Local Market Potential. Bangor has a stable and diverse local market. The area's economic base includes sectors such as healthcare, education, and retail, providing opportunities for businesses in these and related industries. Additionally, Bangor's growing tourism industry can be a valuable market for businesses related to hospitality and food services.

Innovative City Initiatives. The City of Bangor is actively engaged in several forward-thinking projects that demonstrate its commitment to economic growth, innovation, and community well-being.

Bangor's Central Kitchen Project: The Bangor Central Kitchen project is primarily focused on stimulating business growth and job creation in the food industry. It will provide commercial kitchen space at below-market prices, enabling food entrepreneurs and small businesses to operate in a professional environment without the

high overhead costs typically associated with commercial kitchens. The project will also create jobs in food production, packaging, and distribution.

VA Hospital Project: Bangor is partnering with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on an ambitious healthcare project that will significantly impact the city's landscape and economy. This project represents a major investment in Bangor's healthcare infrastructure, promising to enhance medical services for veterans in the region. The construction and operation of the new hospital will create numerous jobs, stimulate local businesses, and potentially attract related industries to the area.

Visit www.BangorMaine.gov for more information.

SACO, MAINE: BUSINESS-FRIENDLY BY NATURE

Saco is an extraordinary place to build a business, raise a family, enjoy nature, and realize your dreams. The community's success speaks volumes, with numerous companies thriving here. Saco is ideal for establishing a new venture, expanding a current business, or helping an existing one flourish with the land, space, and resources needed for success.

Strategic Location & Abundant Opportunities. Situated at the mouth of the Saco River in southern Maine along the Atlantic Ocean, Saco is less than 20 minutes south of Downtown Portland and under two hours north of Boston. The city boasts a picturesque and vibrant downtown, a revitalized Mill District, and a booming economy.

Saco offers both financial incentives for businesses as well as an exceptional quality of life for employees. Its accessibility is unrivaled, with proximity to Interstate 95, US Route 1, and a key stop along the Amtrak Downeaster and CSX Corp. freight rail. Local travel options include BSOOB Transit and various ride-share services.

Saco is forward-thinking, utilizing studies and master plans to guide business attraction, retention, and expansion.



Driving the Future of Route 1 in Saco

ALL along the Portland Road corridor in Saco, big things are happening. Infrastructure expansion, transportation improvements, and existing landmark locations are coinciding with rapid new development in this well-traveled growth area. And there's still room to get your foot in the door.

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CITY OF Saco

TRACEY DESJARDINS
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

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This industrial park in Saco, Maine is home to 100+ businesses, including FedEx, Frito-Lay, and Boise Cascade.

The city's commercial spaces include revitalized mills on Saco Island, a historical downtown, lease spaces in the Industrial Park and Mill Brook Business Park, and abundant developable land along Route 1.

Saco boasts the only Federal Opportunity Zone in York County and is part of Maine's Pine Tree Development Zones. The Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts optimize land use and provide opportunities for credit enhancement agreements (CEAs). A comprehensive Zoning Ordinance update has streamlined the permitting and development process, enhancing efficiency and ease.

Saco recently broke ground on a state-of-the-art water resource recovery facility for wastewater treatment and with the new interchange project slated to open the fall of 2025 to improve traffic connections to and from the turnpike is another example of the millions of dollars being invested for the growth opportunity in Saco.

Join the Momentum. With a robust financial toolkit and responsive city staff, Saco continues to attract businesses. The Rt. 1 Corridor and downtown area are experiencing significant growth in both housing and businesses, which makes it ideal for a vibrant community. The city is

ready to help you establish or grow your business here, making the community even more vibrant.

Experience A High-Quality of Life.

Saco offers a premier public school system and enrollment in the prestigious Thornton Academy as its high school. Thornton Academy is renowned for its flexible and comprehensive academic

program, attracting day students from across the state and international students through its boarding program. Recently, Saco voters approved a plan to build two new schools for pre-K through fifth-grade students, consolidating the current four schools onto a single campus. This significant investment will

(Continued on page 108)



Join our Maker Economy in CLAREMONT!

The City of Claremont is home to a number of diverse companies with targeted growth in technology, manufacturing, the City Center and housing.

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TEXAS IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS



BY KYLE PESCHLER

THE LONE STAR STATE HAS SHOWN TO HAVE A FASTER JOB GROWTH RATE COMPARED TO THE U.S.

Over the last 12 months, Texas had a faster rate of job growth than the rest of the nation based on the July employment data released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Texas set records for the number of residents working and the overall size of the Texas labor force.

“Our skilled and growing workforce is a magnet for innovative businesses and entrepreneurs seeking to expand

and succeed,” said Governor Greg Abbott. “As a result, Texas employers added jobs at a faster rate than the nation over the last 12 months and more Texans are working than ever before. The diversity of industries growing across our great state is a testament to the resilience of Texas businesses and the Best Business Climate in America. With increasing investments in education, innovation, and workforce training, we continue to build a bigger, better Texas for all.”

During the past year, Texas reached the highest labor force ever with 15.3 million with growth of nearly 250,000. Self-employed Texans increased to the number of 14,731,400. Texas added 265,500 non-farm jobs from July 2023 to July 2024, which was more than the United States as a whole in annual growth rate. In July 2024, the Texas unemployment rate was only 0.2 percentage points below the national rate at 4.1%. The Texas Workforce Commission July employment data shows that there are more than half a million job listings in the state.

Texas has seen the shift of companies moving their headquarters to their state as well. At a fireside chat with the Portland Chamber of Commerce, Gov. Abbott discussed the economic policies that allow businesses to thrive in Texas.

A highly skilled workforce, newly created Texas Business Courts, and extensive infrastructure with more road miles and airports than any other state have made the Lone Star State more appealing to companies looking to relocate their headquarters.

Gov. Abbott commented on Texas’s workforce saying, “People came to Texas because of the freedom and opportunity we offer here. Last year, I signed into law House Bill 5, which gives local jurisdictions the economic tools they need to attract businesses to come to Texas or grow their operations within our state. Everyone in Texas has the chance to succeed and thrive. Together, we will build a bigger, better Texas for the next generation of Texans.”

PHOTO: ADDBESTOCKSIRINPORN

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Beyond our booming economy, you'll find landscapes filled with adventure, food flavored with goodness, and new Texans falling in love with life. Unlock your potential here.



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For more info, visit BusinessFacilities.com/location-info

TOMBALL TX: MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS CHOOSE THE CITY FOR OPENINGS

The business-friendly environment and premier location of Tomball, Texas has captured the attention and investment of international corporations. Multibillion-dollar global retailer Costco and Cambodia-based innovative solar energy manufacturer Imperial Star Solar each recently celebrated grand openings in Tomball.

Pinpointing Tomball for its latest project in corporate expansion, Costco's 40th location in Texas opened the doors to its 152,000-square-foot Tomball store August 16 2024. In addition to a gas station, the membership-only wholesale facility also features a bakery, optical department, tire center and food court. Hundreds were on hand for the ribbon-cutting ceremony—including the city's mayor, fire chief, police chief and other officials.

Showcasing the city's dedication to development and growth, in 2022 Tomball signed-off on rezoning land at the corner of Highway 249 and Holderrieth Road. The pivot shifted that site, where Costco now operates, from a planned development district to commercial zoning. In coordination with Tomball's City Council, shortly

after Costco filed its permits with the city, the Tomball Economic Development Corporation chose to provide Costco with a multimillion-dollar Economic Development Grant to help offset infrastructure expenses. The store is estimated to deliver \$651 million in sales during its first six years of operation.

Just days before Costco began serving customers in Tomball, Imperial Star Solar Co., Ltd. (Imperial Star Solar) held a grand opening celebration of its first solar panel manufacturing facility in the United States.

Imperial Star, a company employing 1,500 professionals and committed to a brighter, more sustainable future through its renewable energy initiatives, signed a 380,000-square-foot lease agreement — choosing to invest in Tomball over other options in Texas, Ohio and North Carolina. At its full capacity, which the company targeted to achieve weeks after the grand opening, the plant will be able to manufacture two gigawatts of solar panels. That's enough energy to power more than a quarter-million homes.

However, Imperial Star is producing more than just energy solutions. The company says its inaugural U.S. investment is expected to provide 350 jobs to the area.

The Imperial Star plant is located in Interchange 249, at the nexus of The Grand Parkway and Highway 249. Interchange 249 is a potential 3.1 million square-foot development consisting of warehouse and light industrial. Imperial Star Solar joins a growing group of anchor tenants, including Macy's, Inc.

Adjacent to Interchange 249, The Grand at 249, a \$90 million, 65-acre regional retail center, is under development to deliver more than 400,000 retail square footage. Completion is expected by 2025.

Infrastructure investments throughout Tomball have allowed for the development boom. Expansions to The Grand Parkway and Highway 249, including direct connectors, and road extensions within Tomball improve connectivity and accessibility for businesses, residents and visitors.

Fueled by a skilled workforce and guided by its collaborative spirit and principles to help businesses thrive, the city of Tomball is a destination of choice for global companies eyeing milestone ventures.

Visit www.TomballEDC.org for more information.

ODESSA TX: LIBERTY ENERGY BRINGS HEADQUARTERS HERE

Liberty Energy and Odessa Development Corporation are set to invest \$50 million into a regional headquarters in Odessa, TX.

When Liberty Energy began looking for its next expansion location, CEO Chris Wright knew the property had to check off several important boxes.



(Left) Grand opening celebration at Imperial Star Solar in Tomball, TX.
(Right) Imperial Star Solar facility under construction.



PHOTO: TOMBALLEDC

PLANT AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS

Expands to West Texas

The Lubbock Economic Development Alliance (LEDA) announced a public-private partnership with Plant Agricultural Systems (PLANT-AS), an infrastructure service provider delivering both the physical and digital infrastructure necessary to support localized fresh produce demand in all regions of the world. PLANT-AS' Lubbock project includes the development of 13.3M square feet of advanced CEA production facilities with a capital investment of \$670M and more than 900 jobs.

The company's vision is to dynamically enable society's transition to more sustainable methods of food production, distribution, and consumption. PLANT-AS will develop over 1,100 acres of advanced Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) production in West Texas as a part of its phase one domestic operations rollout.

For more information on the new location, scan the QR code.



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Liberty Energy CEO Chris Wright speaks about the future of Liberty Energy during a groundbreaking at Leeco Industrial Park in Odessa, TX.

The company needed a prime work site with room for growth, a supportive business environment and skilled local workforce, plus easy access to highways and interstates.

Wright, along with representatives from the Odessa Development Corporation (ODC), Odessa Chamber of Commerce and City of Odessa, broke ground on the company's new regional headquarters in March.

"Liberty is excited about this new \$50 million facility," Wright told the crowd gathered there. "We are in the business of bettering human lives, and there is no better place to make that happen than in Odessa, Texas, the heart of the Permian Basin."

Located in Odessa's Leeco Industrial Park, the project will include a state-of-the-art, 42-bay maintenance workshop, six-bay truck wash facility, 50,000-square-foot warehouse, and a two-story office building and employee training center.

The new headquarters will allow Liberty to consolidate multiple facilities under one roof with plenty of room for future expansion.

"This will let us more efficiently deliver services," Wright said. Liberty, which offers oil well completion and wireline services across the United States and Canada, recently added a power innovation division.

Wright predicted the company may even sell electricity from the Odessa campus.

In addition to Liberty's \$50 million investment, the ODC awarded the company a \$2.5 million grant as an incentive to locate the project in Odessa.

Liberty and ODC have a five-year contract, with Liberty receiving a fifth of that \$2.5 million at the end of each year that it meets its investment, job creation and salary requirements. Not only does the project retain 1,000 current Liberty employees, but it allows for the creation of 500 more positions, a number of which will be administrative and managerial.

The project is a win-win for everyone involved.

"We are focused on investment in this community and its people, and these public-private partnerships are how we grow. It's all about the jobs," Tom Manskey, Director of Economic Development at the Odessa Chamber of Commerce, said.

Plentiful local and state economic development incentives make relocating and operating a business in Odessa and Ector County a wise investment. Land, sites and buildings are also available to match every need, from the entrepreneurial startup to the growing corporation seeking to expand. The Odessa Business Park has 60 available acres, while the Odessa Industrial Park has 30 acres.

Manskey added that the entire process—from Liberty approaching the development department to breaking ground—happened in less than a year.

"We want to work with businesses," Manskey said. "We want to help companies in any way that we can, whether that is helping locate building sites to funding infrastructure, to other tax incentives, Odessa is open for business!"

Construction is expected to be complete by the end of 2025.

Visit only-odessa.com for more information.

YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW GREEN IT IS HERE.

As a major energy center, Odessa, Texas, understands manufacturing. And we're using that knowledge to accelerate renewable energy manufacturing. We offer just what the industry requires — an abundance of sun, wind and land — not to mention an abundance of possibilities for your business. **ONLY ODESSA**

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MARBLE FALLS, TX: EMERGES AS PREMIER TEXAS DESTINATION

Like most communities, Marble Falls has commercial and industrial land that is available for development. The town of just over 7,500 also has reasonably good transportation infrastructure and proximity to large urban centers like Austin (60 minutes away) and San Antonio (75 minutes away). The area can start claiming some advantages as a scenic lake town in the Texas Hill Country, popular for retirees and tourists alike, with recent growth creating new opportunities in the health-care, light manufacturing, and professional office sectors. Being a regional shopping hub for more than 121,000 people gives Marble Falls an energetic vibe unrivaled by communities of similar size.

What sets Marble Falls apart, however, now more than ever, is the community's small-town values coupled with its welcoming attitude toward newcomers. In the last few years, new residents from over 100 counties in 43 states have fueled steady growth and development across the region. From 2020 to 2021, household income grew more in Burnet County than

in any other county in the state. People are realizing that, if they can work from anywhere, they want to work from the Marble Falls area.

“What sets Marble Falls apart, however, now more than ever, is the community’s small-town values coupled with its welcoming attitude toward newcomers.”

Downtown Marble Falls in particular has both contributed to and benefited from that growth. Professional offices and small headquarter facilities are well-situated here with proximity to quaint shops, great restaurants, and amazing park space. After years of planning, a new anchor development is finally underway: the Ophelia Hotel & Conference Center,

part of the Tapestry Collection by Hilton. The project will feature 127 guestrooms, approximately 10,000 square feet of meeting space, and unique food and beverage offerings.

While the emergence of Marble Falls as the retail and entertainment hub of the Highland Lakes area is a relatively recent development, the community's draw for generations has been its connection to the outdoors. Beautiful Lake Marble Falls is ideal for skiing, kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding, and the Downtown parks along the waterfront are continually enhanced by a \$25 million improvement plan that began in 2019.

Marble Falls is already a special place, and community leaders are focused on making incremental improvements to a few areas while maintaining momentum in others. When it comes to new businesses, size and fit are critical considerations. Small- to medium-sized companies will likely have an easier time with real estate and employment than very large firms—and the community likes it that way. If the prospects of a charming small town with steady, manageable growth and a surpris-



Marble Falls, Texas – A scenic lake town where opportunities in light manufacturing, health-care and professional office sectors abound.

PHOTO: WWW.MARBLEFALLSECONOMY.COM

ing set of amenities sound appealing, give Marble Falls a shot. Whether your interests lead to a greenfield development in the Business and Technology Park or the restoration of an historic downtown structure into a live/work/shop space, opportunities abound in Marble Falls.

Visit www.marblefallseconomy.com for more information.

LUBBOCK, TX: THRIVING IN THE HEARTLAND

Located in America's Heartland, Lubbock, Texas is known for its thriving agriculture, manufacturing and technology sectors. Companies such as Leprino Foods and Plant Agricultural Systems (Plant A-S) recognized the region's prominence in food production and its available skilled labor force, choosing to expand into the area. These advantages,

and more, provide endless opportunities for companies to grow in Lubbock.

With a vision to modernize the digital infrastructure required to support fresh produce demand worldwide, PLANT-AS announced its expansion to West Texas. The modernization of the region's strong agriculture industry with new technology exhibits strong parallels to the ever evolving and diversifying economy found across the region. The monumental partnership between Lubbock and Amarillo in bringing ground-breaking technology to the Texas Panhandle has not only bridged two hubs but planted a strong foundation for future industry growth through the region.

The expansion includes the development of 13.3 million square feet of advanced Controlled-Environment Agriculture (CEA) production facilities on 700 acres where



Construction at the new Leprino facility in Lubbock is underway.

fresh produce will be grown using state-of-the-art hydroponic technology.

Construction nears completion the 850,000-square-foot facility located in East Lubbock where over one million pounds of

We Mean Business.

Tomball, Texas is setting itself apart as a one-of-a-kind professional, progressive and productive community that outperforms in all areas.

Shaped by Culture.
Driven by Commerce.
Connected by Community.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP.
www.tomballtxedc.org

For more info, visit BusinessFacilities.com/location-info

cheese will be processed daily by Leprino Foods, a global leader in mozzarella cheese and other dairy nutrition production. Served by regional dairies throughout West Texas, roughly 200 trucks per day will be needed to service this facility. Lubbock's agriculture industry is one of the major pillars of the Lubbock economy.

Supported by world-class food safety, operations, training, and maintenance programs, as well as monitored and controlled through leading-edge automation and instrumentation, this facility will expand Leprino's existing network of mozzarella cheese production plants around the world. The finished products will be distributed throughout the United States and internationally.

Visit www.lubbockeda.org for more information.

HUNTSVILLE TX: A GROWING METRO

Nestled on the edge of East Texas, Huntsville stands out not only for its charming small-town atmosphere but also for its strategic location. Approximately 70 miles north of Houston, Huntsville serves as a key junction for transportation and commerce, making it an attractive destination for both residents and businesses. Its proximity to the Port of Houston enhances its appeal, providing direct access to one of the largest ports in the United States.

The City of Huntsville is situated at the intersection of U.S. Highway 190 and Interstate 45, offering convenient access to major urban centers and the Gulf Coast. This prime location allows residents to enjoy a peaceful, suburban lifestyle while remaining within commuting distance of business hubs like Houston. The City's well-developed transportation infrastructure supports both local commuting and a vibrant economy, positioning Huntsville as a logistical advantage for businesses.

Huntsville's infrastructure plays a vital role in its continued growth. The city has well-maintained roads and easy access to



An aerial view of Huntsville, TX, a growing metro for infrastructure, business incentives, and partnerships.

highways, facilitating seamless movement for residents and enhancing logistics for businesses. This reliable transportation network makes Huntsville an appealing location for companies seeking a presence in East Texas.

With a diverse population of approximately 47,000 residents, the city has experienced steady growth. Families, students, and professionals are drawn to Huntsville by its blend of history, culture, and opportunities. Huntsville exemplifies a city on the rise, leveraging its strategic advantages to foster a thriving community.

The City of Huntsville is home to Sam Houston State University (SHSU), one of Texas's oldest institutions of higher education. SHSU significantly influences the local economy and culture, with a student population of over 21,000. This dynamic student presence invigorates the City's atmosphere and stimulates local businesses. Through a strong partnership with SHSU, Huntsville benefits from a skilled workforce that attracts industries

looking for talent and innovation.

Huntsville's economy is further strengthened by its rich historical heritage and vibrant tourism industry. Attractions such as the Sam Houston Memorial Museum, the iconic Sam Houston statue, scenic parks, and various community events celebrate local culture while drawing visitors from across the region. These attractions not only boost tourism but also provide opportunities for businesses to thrive.

As the City of Huntsville continues to grow, its focus on infrastructure, business incentives, and partnerships remains central to its development strategy. By fostering a business-friendly environment and encouraging community engagement, the City is well-positioned to attract new residents and enterprises, ensuring a vibrant future. With its strong infrastructure, appealing business incentives, and solid partnerships, Huntsville is more than a place to live—it's a place to grow, innovate, and succeed.

Visit www.HuntsvilleTXed.com for more information. 📍

BY KYLE PESCHLER

THE KEYSTONE STATE
HAS LAUNCHED A
LONG-TERM ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
PLAN THAT WILL SPUR
STATEWIDE GROWTH.



Governor Josh Shapiro speaks at January 2024, visit to OraSure Technologies in Bethlehem, PA.

Pennsylvania Incentives Help Attract Business

Pennsylvania is laser focused on showcasing the advantages it offers to business, with a new economic development strategy as a guiding force. The new plan aims to make the Commonwealth more competitive on a national scale.

The states 2024-25 budget will secure \$500 million for site development, including \$400 million for the Pennsylvania Strategic Investments to Enhance Sites (PA SITES) Program which would build on the manufacturing progress local companies are making in Northeast Pennsylvania.

"Last year, our PA SITES pilot program made \$10 million in grants available for developers and companies—and we secured \$500 million for site development in this year's budget to build on that progress to turn more dirt into jobs, help Pennsylvania compete for more transformational economic development projects, and invest that money back into our communities," said Governor Josh Shapiro.

During the PA SITES program application period, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DECD) received 102 applications which requested more

than \$236 million in funding, which outweighed the \$10 million in funding from the 2023-24 budget. The budget signed by Gov. Shapiro gives the needed investments to make sites more competitive for potential businesses through transportation access, utility extensions, and the grading of pad-ready sites.

According to DCED Secretary Rick Siger, "We now have \$500 million to invest in site development, which our communities and regions, like right here in NEPA, need to compete to attract good, family-sustaining jobs."

According to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, "The \$500 million for site development secured in the 2024-25 budget builds on the \$13 million in PA First funding Governor Shapiro secured in the 2023-24 budget—including \$10.6 million of which was made available for the PA SITES pilot program."

The bipartisan budget includes \$20 million for the Main Street Matters program to support small businesses that help boost local economies, including

\$20 million in state funding for small minority-owned businesses in Pennsylvania. Lastly, \$15 million for tourism marketing to boost the state economy, attract more visitors, and support good-paying jobs, which builds on Gov. Shapiro's launch of the Great American Getaway brand to encourage residents of nearby states to drive and visit Pennsylvania

HORSHAM TOWNSHIP: A THRIVING COMMUNITY

Horsham Township, Pennsylvania is a hometown favorite for business. The township is located 16 miles from center city Philadelphia and is easily accessed off the Pennsylvania Turnpike, or Routes 309 or 611. The parks in Horsham define this community, as the township has cultivated both business parks and open spaces, trails and parks, to create an amazing sense of place and community. The township is home to five major business parks with more than seven million square feet of com-

mercial office, flex space and diagnostic, laboratory and CGMP manufacturing space. The township is situated in close proximity to several incubator and innovation zones in the region, and it is well-positioned for CGMP BioPharma manufacturing.

In 2016, Horsham Township adopted a new master plan for its business parks, serving to encourage updating and amenitizing them. The township has invested more than \$35 million in infrastructure improvements which served to encourage private investments of more than \$250 million. The township is well known to be business-friendly, with ample access to a highly educated workforce in close proximity to Horsham and a solid stock of local workforce housing. The township has no mercantile or business privilege tax, has one of the lowest real estate tax burdens in the region, and offers per square foot rental rates that compare favorably to local markets.

When business park employees and local residents have downtime, many

refresh their mind and day with walks or bike rides on the township trails or by participating in activities in the community or neighborhood parks. The township has one of the largest municipal park systems in Montgomery County, PA with almost 900 acres of open spaces and parks, which includes 14 miles of trails.

"Horsham Township, a community connected" is the township's tag line, as the community's connection to the region provides a myriad of local opportunities, destinations, and experiences. Whether interested in the Philly region's best attractions, great local golf, family adventures, or great dining and regional food, Horsham Township is in the thick of things and with great proximity and access to so much.

While Horsham Township enjoys a vibrant and exciting community for both business, residents, and visitors from near and far, the truth is, they are just getting started! For almost 70 years, the township was the proud home to

the Naval Air Station – Joint Reserve Base (NAS-JRB) Willow Grove that hosted all of the major military services. The base was closed in 2011, and there remains an amazing opportunity to further grow and redefine Horsham Township.

The former NAS-JRB Willow Grove property is 862 acres and represents almost 8% of the township. While a number of things slowed down the base transfer, both good and bad, the township sees a day in the not too distant future where redevelopment will begin on an exciting mixed-use town center and a new community within the community.

To learn more, visit Horsham Township Economic Development at <https://www.horsham.org/pview.aspx?id=43036&catid=611>. 📍



Horsham Township, part of the Greater Philly metro area, is in the heart of the fifth largest economy in the world, with 40% of the U.S. population within a one-day drive.

PHOTO: HORSHAM TOWNSHIP, PA



**PRIME
LOCATION**



HORSHAM
PENNSYLVANIA

HOMETOWN

FAVORITE FOR BUSINESS



Ample Access to a Highly Educated Workforce



Office & Lab Space



Access to Transportation



**Affordable Housing
for Every Level of Income**



Higher Education

- 44, 4-year colleges within an hour's drive
- Regional hub for research and development

As a part of the Greater Philadelphia metropolitan area, **Horsham Township is in the heart of the 5th largest economy in the world**, with 40% of the U.S. population within a single day's drive, and 60% of the U.S. and Canadian populations accessible within a two-hour flight. This amazingly business-friendly township is home to five major business parks offering 6.4 million square feet of commercial office and flex space.

Horsham Township offers an excellent highway infrastructure with easy access to the Pennsylvania Turnpike and several major arterial corridors as well as 3 regional rail lines and local public transportation. There are 44, 4-year colleges and/or universities within an hour's drive. The region is a hub for research and development. This affluent and highly educated area appeals to a broad spectrum of employees and has affordable housing for every income level.

Horsham Township... a hometown favorite for business.

Let Horsham Township Roll Out the Red Carpet for You and Your Business.

Please Contact Larry Burns, Director of Community and Economic Development
at (267) 705-6851 or email at lburns@horsham.org

INDUSTRY PRODUCTIVITY FUELS UTAH

The skyline of Utah's Capital, Salt Lake City.

BY KYLE PESCHLER

COMPANIES IN A RANGE
OF INDUSTRIES
FIND OPPORTUNITY
IN THE BEEHIVE
STATE'S PRO-BUSINESS
ENVIRONMENT.

The state of Utah has been thriving in 2024 with many industries seeing a rise in innovation and success. With multiple industries playing a part in Utah's economic growth, there have been five that have been the most productive, according to a recent analysis by the Economic Development Corporation of Utah (EDCUtah). Those industries are

petroleum and coal products manufacturing; real estate; financial services; software publishing; and computer infrastructure; processing; and web hosting.

The most productive industries had the highest GDP per employee and the highest gross surplus. The most productive Utah industries produce complex products with large supply chains that have extensive infrastructure needs. Other Utah industries produce higher dollar outputs such as software and information technology.

According to EDCUtah analysis on the petroleum and coal manufacturing industry, "Utah has a relatively low unemployment in this industry, with only about 1,800 employees statewide, but a high labor density, since this industry does not have high employment nationwide. Nevertheless, this industry has grown rapidly over the last five years and produces an astounding \$1.7 million in GDP per employee."

According to data taken from an EDCUtah study in May 2024, the Utah 2023-2024 fiscal year saw 57 manufactur-

ing facility projects and 28 project wins, 18 of which have been completed.

"Utah's business environment is primarily attractive for our comparatively lower operating costs. That includes a combination of lower utility costs and talent costs," stated EDCUtah.

Also in July, the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity (GOEO) released FY 2024 information about the performance of the state's Economic Development Tax Increment Financing (EDTIF) and Rural Economic Development Tax Increment Financing (REDTIF) programs. From July 2023 to June 2024, 20 companies participated in the state's board-approved tax credit program and are collectively projected to create 8,549 new jobs, make \$2.4 billion in new capital investments, pay \$539 million in new state tax revenue, and provide \$6.2 billion in new state wages over the next 20 years.

Created by the state legislature in 2005, the EDTIF program is for companies offering high-wage jobs, offering salaries at least 110% of the average county wage and 100% of the average rural county

Layton East Gate Business Park



HILL AIR FORCE BASE

- **250 acres**

- Permitted manufacturing use
- The East Gate of Hill Air Force Base
- 28 minutes to **Snowbasin Ski Resort**
- 28 minutes to **SLC International Airport**
- Quick access to Hwy 193 and Interstates 15/84
- Existing **Aerospace & Defense** Contractors

• JANICKI • KIHOMAC • WESTEST • RANTEC • GURU •



- 28 minutes from **SLC International Airport**
- Greenfield: lease/purchase, build to suit
- 37 minutes to **Snowbasin Ski Resort**
- Potential VERTIPORT opportunity
- **NEW** interchange @ 2700 West
- **NEW** highway connects to **I-15**
- Permitted business park use

- **150 acres**

COME TO LAYTON

**NEW WEST
DAVIS CORRIDOR
HIGHWAY & INTERCHANGE**

West Layton Business Park



wage. The REDTIF tax credit program is a rural modification of the EDTIF program that allows projects located in rural areas to pay at least 100% of the county average wage to qualify for more significant incentives.

"Utah's economic growth trajectory is set for continued prosperity as we surpass records and set new benchmarks," said Ryan Starks, Executive Director of GOEO. "I commend our team for their ongoing efforts in driving investments through the EDTIF and REDTIF tax incentive programs, which are strengthening diverse industries."

LAYTON, UT: WHERE COMMUNITY THRIVES AND BUSINESS SOARS

Discover Layton, a vibrant city nestled between the majestic Wasatch Mountains and the Great Salt Lake. With a rich history dating back to 1850, Layton has transformed from a small agricultural community into a thriving suburb offering an exceptional quality of life and unparalleled business opportunities.

Layton began as an agricultural extension of Kaysville, Utah, established by Mormon Pioneers. Home to about 87,000 residents today, locals enjoy a thriving economy with consistent growth in business and career opportunities. With a vibrant culture and consistent, sustainable economic growth, it's no wonder the city has achieved rankings as one of the best cities to live.

Layton's strategic location, robust economy, and exceptional infrastructure make it an ideal place to live, work, and play. As the economic heart of Utah's Davis County, the city boasts a diverse business landscape, including thriving sectors in aerospace, manufacturing, technology, healthcare, education, and finance.

Layton City is a main employment center for Davis County and Northern Utah. The city provides primary access to Hill Air Force Base (HAFB), Utah's largest single-site employer.



The view from Thurston Peak looking southwest over Layton, Utah.

The eastern boundary of Hill Air Force Base features the East Gate Business Park, ready to accept new development with available tax increment reimbursement. This area is home to well-respected aeronautic and defense related companies that rave about the scenic setting as they watch their products take off and land outside their office windows. East Gate is primed for additional high tech employers to join them. Additionally, a new 150-acre business park just opened around a new highway and new interchange in West Layton.

Layton is dedicated to creating a supportive environment for businesses of all sizes. Local businesses benefit from competitive tax rates, a streamlined permitting process, access to a skilled workforce, and available high-speed UTOPIA Fiber with its existing 100 mb dedicated fiber optic infrastructure.

Layton's commitment to fostering a strong sense of community is evident in well-planned neighborhoods, top-rated schools, and abundant recreational

amenities. Providing housing options for residents has always been a priority. With substantial population growth and increasing housing costs, Layton remains committed in providing diverse housing options for its workforce, including those who serve on Hill Air Force Base.

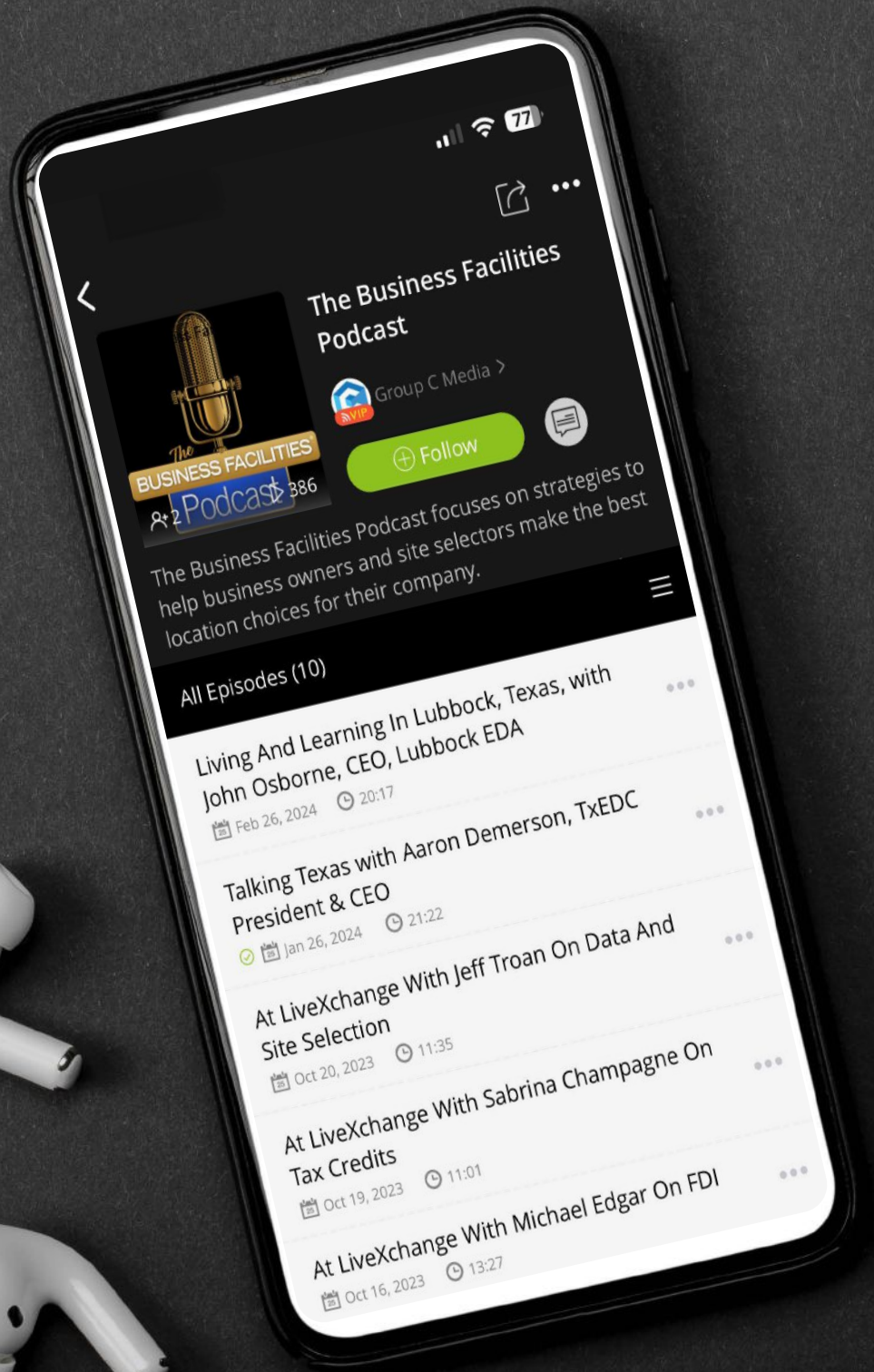
Enjoy easy access to world-class outdoor adventures, including hiking, biking, and skiing, or relax in one of several scenic parks. Layton offers convenient access to transportation including two interstates, highways, public transit, high speed commuter rail, and is located only 25 minutes from Salt Lake International Airport.

Discover the perfect balance of work and play in Layton. Enjoy a thriving arts and culture scene, delicious dining options, and convenient shopping. With more than 150 dining choices, there's a restaurant to cater to everyone's taste. Shoppers can enjoy familiar retail stores at Layton Hills Mall, as well as boutique style shops throughout the city.

Visit <https://www.laytonecon.org/> for more information. 📍

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The Inside
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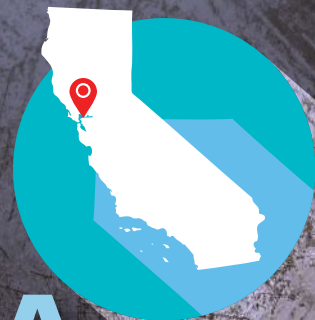


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ANTIOCH, CA



BY BF EDITORS

THE CITY OF ANTIOCH
IS A GROWING HUB FOR
ECONOMIC VITALITY AND
OPPORTUNITY IN
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

Business Facilities: *Please tell us about the status of economic development in Antioch, CA.*

City of Antioch: Nestled at the strategic crossroads of Northern California, Antioch stands as a dynamic hub of economic vitality and opportunity. Positioned equidistantly between the major cities of San Francisco, Sacramento, San Jose, and Stockton, Antioch has become a magnet for talent and a cornerstone of Northern California's workforce.

Antioch's economic landscape is evolving rapidly, driven by the city's Economic Development Strategic Plan, updated in 2022. This comprehensive strategy features nine key initiatives focused on business development, real estate growth, entrepreneurship, and fostering public-private partnerships. The city's commitment to supporting local entrepreneurs, expanding small businesses, and attracting new industry leaders is complemented by a strong focus on social equity. This forward-thinking approach is paying dividends, as evidenced by the influx of new businesses and an expanding economic base.



The City of Antioch, CA, offers a quality of life that balances work and leisure, making it an ideal option for new and expanding businesses.

BF: *Why should companies consider Antioch for its next relocation or expansion? What are targeted or growth industries in 2024?*

Antioch: For companies considering relocation or expansion, Antioch presents a compelling case. The city is projected to experience substantial growth over the next two decades, with expected increases in population (26%), households (23%), and employment (18%).

Currently, Antioch boasts thriving sectors in healthcare, business services, technology, education, retail, and construction. The city is also at the forefront of emerging industries such as the green economy and advanced technology.

Antioch has a skilled workforce, proximity to the Bay Area's technological research, and advantageous water access.

Antioch is poised to lead in clean technology, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing. The availability of land for large industrial projects also makes it an attractive location for businesses looking to expand.

BF: *Why is the Antioch workforce an asset to business?*

Antioch: Antioch's workforce is a standout asset for any business. The city's affordable housing market—boasting a median sale price at \$579,000, significantly lower than the regional average—ensures that talented professionals can live where they work. With 65% of dwellings owner-occupied, Antioch provides a stable residential environment.

Residents of Antioch are highly educated, with 60% holding higher education degrees. The local workforce is not only

skilled but also motivated, with 94% employed and a median household income of \$107,000. The city's demographic diversity, including a rich mix of Hispanic, White, Black, Asian, and foreign-born residents, adds to its vibrant and dynamic workforce.

BF: Why is Antioch's location and infrastructure advantageous to today's companies?

Antioch: The city's location offers unparalleled advantages for businesses. Its waterfront industrial lands, including some of the last heavy industrial zoning in the Bay Area, provide prime real estate for industrial development. The city is supported by business-friendly policies, strategic planning, strong partnerships that facilitate growth, and an economic development team with a concierge approach.

In addition to regional technological assets, Antioch is well-connected through rapid transit, linking it seamlessly with other Bay Area cities. Water availability is another key advantage, with the city situated on the Delta and in the process of building a highly anticipated desalination plant.

BF: Why is the quality of life in Antioch desirable?

Antioch: Antioch's quality of life is a significant draw for both residents and businesses. The city's waterfront location offers stunning views and recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing, and marina access. Residents enjoy great weather, a waterpark, community center, and senior center, as well as ample nature-based recreational options like parks and preserves. Community events and gatherings further enhance the city's appeal, fostering a vibrant and engaged local culture.

BF: Why is the future bright for business in Antioch?

Antioch: The future looks exceptionally bright for businesses in Antioch. Recent investments highlight the city's potential, with a major real estate firm developing two new industrial buildings set to open in 2025. Additionally, one of North America's largest auto processors has established a terminal in Antioch, positioning the city as a key player in the global vehicle import market.

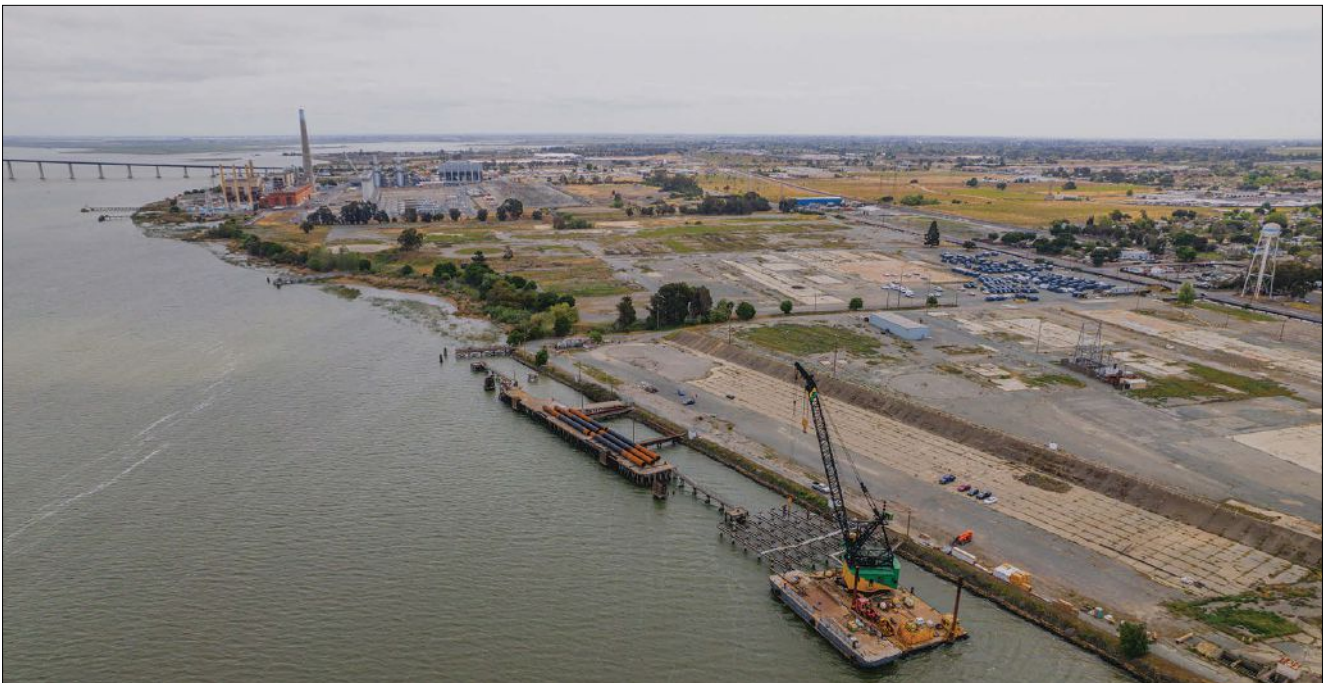
The city is also enhancing its support for existing businesses through newly signed contracts with seven small

business resource providers. These partnerships offer free advising, training, mentorship, capital, and networking opportunities, while also focusing on developing business associations and collaborative industry groups.

BF: What is the current vision for the city's economic development?

Antioch: The city's vision for economic development is centered around creating high-quality jobs, attracting real estate and business investments, and boosting fiscal revenue. The city is committed to fostering an economically vibrant and high-amenity community, with a particular emphasis on investments that promote social equity and provide enhanced opportunities for historically disadvantaged groups.

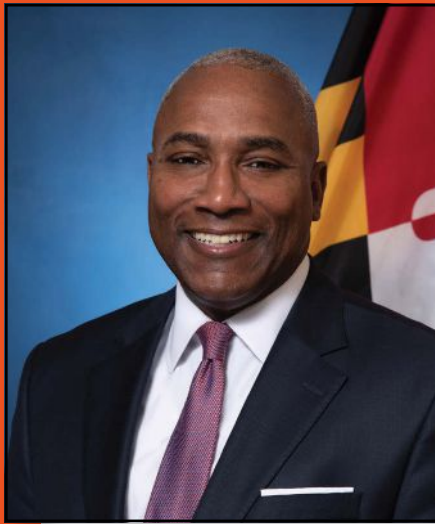
In summary, Antioch is not just a city on the rise; it is a thriving economic hub with a clear vision for the future. Its strategic location, diverse and skilled workforce, supportive infrastructure, and high quality of life make it an ideal choice for businesses seeking growth and opportunity. As Antioch continues to evolve, it stands as a beacon of potential and a prime destination for those looking to invest in a prosperous future. 🌐



The City of Antioch is located strategically on the waterfront and located near Northern California cities, making it a thriving economic hub.

Maryland Is World-Class For Business

with **Kevin Anderson**, Maryland Secretary of Commerce



RESEARCH FACILITIES, AN EDUCATED WORKFORCE, AND EAST COAST LOCATION ARE AMONG ITS ASSETS.

Business Facilities: Please describe Maryland's business climate and the state's broad advantages for business.

Secretary Kevin Anderson: With its central location on the East Coast, Maryland is within an overnight drive of one-third of the U.S. population and boasts easy access to road, rail, airports, and the Port of Baltimore. With our diverse and highly educated workforce, Maryland is ranked No.1 one for gender equality and for minority employment, and numerous federal agencies and assets help us lead in industries such as

BF: What are Maryland's leading industries? Growth industries?

Sec. Anderson: Maryland's top-tier life sciences and cybersecurity industries are fueled by more than 70 federal laboratories as well as agencies including the National Institutes of Health and the National Security Agency.

Military installations such as Aberdeen Proving Ground as well as NASA Goddard Space Flight Center drive innovation and growth in our aerospace sector.

And world-class research institutions like Johns Hopkins University and the University of Maryland, College Park,

BF: What long-standing advantages await businesses that relocate to or expand in Maryland?

Sec. Anderson: In addition to Maryland's strategic location, numerous federal agencies and laboratories, and infrastructure assets like the Port of Baltimore, Maryland offers businesses a highly-educated workforce bolstered by our world-class research universities. We rank in the Top 3 states for science and technology workforce, our concentration of STEM workers, and the percentage of our population with a graduate or



The University of Maryland in College Park

PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

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HUB IN THE U.S.

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TALENT

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INVESTED IN ALL
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Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation operates as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public-private partnership funded by Montgomery County.



Maryland Is World-Class For Business



Washington Monument State Park in Middletown, Maryland.

professional degree. Maryland also ranks No. 1 for tech workforce growth, gender equality, and minority employment, and offers a suite of tax credits and financing programs to support business growth across a wide range of industries.

BF: *What are recent developments that site selection teams should know about when it comes to the Maryland business climate?*

Sec. Anderson: The rapid re-opening of the Port of Baltimore after the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge earlier this year cannot be overstated. Some projections suggested removing the debris could have taken as long as eight months; instead, the shipping channel was fully open again after 11 weeks. Maryland's robust logistics infrastructure is critical to our business community and growth, which is why Maryland industries are supported by many major distribution hubs.

The Maryland Tech Council has also launched an exciting new life sciences

“Military installations such as Aberdeen Proving Ground, as well as NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, drive growth in [the state of Maryland’s] aerospace sector.”

workforce training program in partnership with the National Institute of Bioprocessing Research and Training.

BF: *What is a recent relocation or expansion you'd like to tell us about?*

Sec. Anderson: One of Maryland's most important recent wins is that Prince George's County will be the new home of the FBI, bringing an estimated 7,500 jobs and generating \$4 billion in economic activity. Another important project

nearby is Blink Charging Co.'s selection of the county for its new global headquarters and a new, 30,000 square-foot manufacturing facility. The company, a provider of global EV charging equipment, is an example of Maryland's commitment not only to making our economy stronger by supporting innovative industry sectors, but of our commitment to achieving 100% clean energy by 2035.

BF: *When it comes to quality of life in Maryland, what is a highlight you'd share?*

Sec. Anderson: We have many highlights including our rich artistic, cultural and historical attractions and our legendary cuisine, but the beauty of Maryland's outdoor destinations—from the hills and mountains in the west to the Atlantic beaches and the Chesapeake Bay in the east—is truly unparalleled. From hiking and biking to boating, swimming and fishing; from skiing to baseball to pickleball, you can do it all in Maryland!

PHOTOS: THIS PAGE MARYLAND OFFICE OF TOURISM; OPPOSITE PAGE MARYLAND DEPT. OF COMMERCE

BF: *What does the future hold for business in Maryland?*

Sec. Anderson: Maryland's top-ranked and highly educated workforce will continue to grow, driven both by new graduates of our world-class research universities and by new residents drawn to the state through our "Be Moved" workforce attraction campaign. [Governor Moore's] administration has also made historic investments in child care to help parents rejoin the workforce and delivered record funding for job training and apprenticeships.

Businesses across the world should know that Marylanders are always ready to work! ♦



The Port of Baltimore

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MARYLAND

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10.22

Net Promoter Score

Frederick County is a place where creativity meets innovation, where people discover bright, new opportunities and where a singular idea turns into monumental success.

WHERE PASSION DRIVES PROGRESS



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Life Science
Companies



Access to 3
International Airports
& Port of Baltimore

3rd

In the Nation
Biopharma
Cluster



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TOP INNOVATION

BY BF EDITORS

THIS SAMPLING OF
HUBS OF
INNOVATION
HIGHLIGHTS
LOCATIONS WHERE
BRIGHT MINDS COME
TOGETHER TO
CREATE THE FUTURE.

An innovation hub is a physical or virtual space that brings together people to create and develop new ideas, products, and services. Innovation hubs can be a focal point of a city or a center within an innovation district. Innovation hubs encourage collaboration between different groups, such as researchers, companies, universities, and investors, and provide resources, such as workspaces, training programs, and mentorship opportunities. These locations also may encourage entrepreneurship, featuring incubators or accelerators for early-stage startups. Some innovation hubs have experts on hand to offer advice and direction, and these hubs might also help businesses improve processes, products, and services.

One of the hallmark features of an innovation hub is its emphasis on collaboration. By bringing together individuals from various disciplines, sectors, and backgrounds, these spaces create a tapestry of ideas and perspectives. This interaction often leads to cross-pollination, where ideas evolve through discussions and collaborations. Networking events, workshops, and seminars are commonly organized to facilitate these connections.

Innovation hubs typically offer access to resources that might be difficult for individuals or small startups to obtain on their own. This can include state-of-the-art technology, funding opportunities, mentorship from experienced professionals, and even administrative support. Innovation hubs can take various forms, each with its unique focus. Some might concentrate on specific industries, such as technology, healthcare,

PHOTO: ADDBESOTCK/VELOONE



HUBS TO WATCH

or green energy, while others are more general.

The atmosphere within an innovation hub is usually designed to be open and supportive. This includes flexible workspaces, communal areas, and quiet zones, catering to different working styles. Such an environment encourages experimentation and risk-taking, essential components of the innovation process. In a rapidly evolving global landscape, innovation hubs play a crucial role in shaping the future of industries and societies. By fostering collaboration, providing essential resources, and nurturing a supportive environment, these hubs are essential for cultivating the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs. As they continue to grow and evolve, their potential to impact economies and communities

remains significant, paving the way for advancements and solutions.

AUSTIN, TEXAS

<https://opportunityaustin.com/>

Austin, Texas has evolved from an emerging tech hub to an established, globally competitive market. Recognized as the #1 Market to Watch by Jones Lang LaSalle (JLL), Austin's innovation landscape brings together research, development, and collaboration, positioning it as a "hub of hubs" where groundbreaking advancements flourish.

At the core of Austin's innovation ecosystem is Capital Factory, an accelerator, incubator, and venture firm that plays a pivotal role in the city's tech landscape. Capital Factory recently partnered with the Defense Advanced Research Proj-

ects Agency (DARPA), becoming one of the few U.S. accelerators to do so. This collaboration supports aerospace and defense sectors, aligning with the U.S. Army Futures Command, which uses the University of Texas (UT) Austin's Robotics Lab for defense technology innovations.

UT is a powerhouse of innovation itself, boasting over 130 programs dedicated to championing intellectual property creation, entrepreneurship, technology transfer, and corporate sponsored research. These labs and studios contribute to the city's dynamic environment, fostering collaboration between academia, industry, and government entities.

Austin's semiconductor industry is growing with initiatives like the Texas Institute for Electronics (TIE), which advances semiconductor innovation

FEATURE STORY: TOP INNOVATION HUBS

through research, new technologies, fabrication facilities, and workforce development. From January to May, Austin's space tech and semiconductor sectors attracted \$600 million in venture capital, highlighting the region's rising prominence.

Austin's innovation extends to life sciences as well, with the Dell Medical School, Texas Lab Space, and Texas State Accelerator providing vital resources for startups. The city also features dedicated innovation centers, like the General Motors Innovation Center and the Emerson Innovation Center, that drive advancements across sectors.

The Innovation District, anchored by Innovation Tower and institutions like MD Anderson Cancer Center, has partnered with UT to create a \$2.5 billion medical hub. The region's ability to connect all these resources is bolstered by platforms like Dealroom, which integrates spaces, entrepreneurs, and resources to create a cohesive innovation ecosystem.

With major industry clusters that are two or three times larger than the national average as of 2016, Austin's diverse innovation ecosystem supports resilience and sustained growth, proving

that it is not just an emerging tech hub but a global innovation leader.

BALTIMORE TECH HUB

<https://gbc.org/baltimore-region-tech-hub/>

The Baltimore Region Tech Hub in Maryland aspires to become a global leader in innovative predictive healthcare technologies by using equitable artificial intelligence to biotechnologies. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) has designated Baltimore a national tech hub.

With this EDA investment, the Baltimore region will catalyze commercialization of predictive healthcare technologies, improve equitable care delivery and national health outcomes. The region's healthcare technologies will support clinical decision-making, bioethics, personalized medicine, new biologics, and therapeutics.

"The investment will help grow a more equitable economy that will expand opportunity, lead to better outcomes for our residents and make us an internationally leading innovation hub," said Maryland Governor Wes Moore.

"Baltimore's a strong Tech Hub because it has this real solid foundation

of innovation, assets, and resources. There are an incredible number of smart, motivated, people who have visions for how to use technology to make people's lives better," said EDA Tech Hubs Program Director Eric Smith.

The Baltimore Region Tech Hub represents 48 business and technology leaders in the region. Baltimore and seven surrounding counties were selected as one of 31 cities or regions for the federal Tech Hubs Program. This program put the region in line for \$10 billion in federal funding over five years, including \$500 million given for an initial round.

Some business and technology leaders being represented include Johns Hopkins University, Loyola University, Catalyte, Fulton Bank, and Towson University.

THE CHARLOTTE REGION

<https://charlotteregion.com/>

The Charlotte Region offers a business-friendly environment fueled by innovation assets. Comprised of Charlotte, North Carolina and its surrounding 14-county region, the area is a bustling innovation hub for diverse industries.

The Charlotte Region is growing, with a commitment to training and development



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FEATURE STORY: TOP INNOVATION HUBS

to compete across sectors from fintech and healthtech to artificial intelligence and machine learning. Nearly 70,000 people employed in these sectors, with 23% growth in the last year.

The region includes 14 accelerators and incubators. When it comes to investing in startups and area businesses, the most recent numbers show 110+ investors (Angels, VC, Incubators) and nearly \$4 billion in capital invested in the region since 2020. Homegrown unicorns include AvidX-change, Red Ventures, Printful, and Tresata.

Established tech giants also operate here. Microsoft is investing \$1 billion in data center operations in the Charlotte region.

The Charlotte Region as innovation hub is poised to grow with UNC Charlotte now part of the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) I-Corps Hub Mid-Atlantic Region, a network of 11 universities that helps researchers translate inventions to the marketplace. Led by the University of Maryland, the hub pools the combined resources of universities to standardize and offer I-Corps training across the region.

The NSF Innovation Corps program provides researchers and entrepreneurs with real-world training on incorporating innovations into successful products.

UNC Charlotte doubled its annual research expenditures in the past five years. Last year, the university ranked fourth in the nation in startup companies per research expenditure dollars. In 2021, UNC Charlotte's Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation received the U.S. Small Business Administration's Lab-to-Market Inclusive Innovation Visionary Award.

STATE OF COLORADO

oeid.colorado.gov

In the past year, Colorado institutions won \$290 million in federal funding to support deep tech industries, including quantum, climate resilience and semiconductors. Each of these industries addresses a national technological need, and Colorado's ecosystem—from its

infrastructure to its workforce—is moving them forward.

Quantum computing alone is projected to drive \$3.5 trillion in economic growth, with applications in finance, artificial intelligence, and materials analysis already gaining traction. Colorado is leading the way and the world in quantum companies, jobs, and innovation. The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) recognized Elevate Quantum (EQ), a consortium of over 120 organizations, as a regional tech hub focused on quantum advancement, awarding nearly \$41 million to support its efforts. As a state, Colorado passed legislation to help fund a shared research facility and a loan loss reserve program for small and medium sized quantum companies.

Colorado is also a leader in cleantech. Last year, the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF) selected the Colorado-Wyoming Climate Resilience Engine (CO-WY Engine) for federal funding to develop climate-resilient and sustainable technologies that will help the country monitor, mitigate and adapt to climate impacts. To support these efforts, Colorado committed to align resources with the Engine and Wyoming to increase engagement between businesses, research institutions and federal labs; support the commercialization of new technologies; and grow diversity within the industry's workforce.

Additionally, Colorado is supporting semiconductor companies in their efforts to draw down federal funding available through the CHIPS and Science Act. The strength of the existing ecosystem, a refundable tax credit program, and a grant program put Colorado among a small cohort of states where CHIPS-spurred developments are taking off. So far, Microchip and Entegris have been awarded federal funding totaling over \$160 million.

Across these industries, Colorado's strengths contribute to consistent growth: a stable and collaborative ecosystem, a

nation-leading workforce, global market access, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a commitment to addressing the technological needs of the future.

CUMMINGS RESEARCH PARK, HUNTSVILLE ALABAMA

www.cummingsresearchpark.com

Cummings Research Park (CRP) is home to 300 companies, employing more than 25,000 people and educating 12,000 students from 9th grade through PhD. The second largest research park in the country and the fourth largest in the world with 3,843 acres. CRP is one of the world's leading science and technology research parks, with a mixture of Fortune 500 companies, small businesses, local high-tech and research-based enterprises, U.S. DoD agencies, thriving business incubators and competitive higher-education institutions. In short, CRP is a Community of Innovation sitting in the heart of the Rocket City, Huntsville, Alabama.

CRP was at the epicenter of the DoD industrial growth in Huntsville that occurred in the Apollo program era through today. The companies in the Park have played a vital role in launching humans to the moon or conducting science experiments beyond Earth, creating solutions to human health and plant science conditions, demonstrating world-class engineering and production to keep America safe at home or abroad, and developing the state-of-the-barely-imaginable technology for national defense. Among our 300 companies, Huntsville is home to the HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology and the State of Alabama high performing computing center. They aren't all work and no play, as they have two regional retail and entertainment destinations in the Park that house apartments and hotels. So you can truly live, work, learn and play all inside Cummings Research Park.

Cummings is the 2nd largest research park in the country and 4th largest in



the world and are the most DoD-centric research park in the US. Among our 300 companies is Alabama's largest private patent holder, ADTRAN, and the company that leads Alabama in SBIR funding, CFD Research.

EAST BAY REGION, CALIFORNIA

<https://eastbayeda.org/>

Sitting east of the San Francisco Bay region, the East Bay has become a major hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, becoming one of the fastest-growing areas in Northern California.

With a population of almost 2.8 million and bustling cities such as Oakland and Berkeley, the East Bay has become an ideal place to live, work and do business.

The East Bay area has attracted a highly educated, diverse, and skilled workforce. With schools such as UC Berkeley, California State University-East Bay, and numerous community colleges, employers have access to an abundance of talent. East Bay is home to major companies such as Bayer, Blue Shield, Clorox,

Pixar, and Workday.

The East Bay is home to an innovative ecosystem that encourages a strong talent pipeline which helps businesses grow. World-class institutions provide the foundation for research and development, along with commercialization.

Business incubators and accelerators in the region encourage technology transfer and entrepreneurship support, allowing start-up companies to excel in globally competitive markets.

Manufacturing and leadership in multiple technologies create synergy for cross-discipline innovation, with growing research and development investments in life sciences, clean energy, artificial intelligence, high performance computing, and software. The broad range of economic activity keeps the East Bay region thriving and growing. More venture capital has come to the East Bay than 40 states every year since 2000. In 2021, East Bay companies received over \$10.4 billion in venture capital investment.

GREATER SEATTLE INNOVATION HUB

<https://greater-seattle.com/ai/>

Greater Seattle in Washington State stands at the forefront of AI innovation, with a thriving ecosystem that blends industry giants, startups, and leading research institutions. The region's key industries, including aerospace, biotech, clean tech, life sciences, manufacturing, maritime, and IT, are leveraging AI to solve complex challenges and drive future growth. Key players like Amazon, Microsoft, and the Allen Institute for AI lead the charge, while startups such as Protect AI and Mother-Duck fuel a robust innovation landscape.

Greater Seattle has secured over \$4 billion in AI funding over the past decade and is home to more than 400 AI companies and 200 AI startups. The region's AI talent pool includes 100,000+ software developers, backed by dozens of AI-specific research centers. Seattle consistently ranks as the second-largest new AI job market in the U.S. (Axios, 2024), and its dynamic workforce spans 3,000+ PhDs and 65,000 STEM professionals.



PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK / PIXELPIONEERX

FEATURE STORY: TOP INNOVATION HUBS

The University of Washington (UW) plays a pivotal role, especially through its Institute for Protein Design, which is advancing AI-driven solutions in biotechnology. UW's groundbreaking research is complemented by regional programs like Microsoft's AI for Good, which support AI applications that promote social impact and sustainability.

Greater Seattle's AI leadership extends across the startup ecosystem, research breakthroughs, and collaborative initiatives that foster innovation in various sectors. This fusion of talent, technology, and support programs positions the region as a global leader in AI-driven solutions.

PRBIO TECH HUB, PUERTO RICO

www.eda.gov/funding/programs/regional-technology-and-innovation-hubs/2023/PRBio-Tech-Hub

The PRBio Tech Hub initiative, which was formed by a coalition of public and private sectors, is led by the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust. The innovation hub focuses on the bio-

pharmaceutical and medical device manufacturing industries and will leverage the region's existing assets, like expertise in advanced manufacturing, strong pharmaceutical development partnerships among universities and industry, and biopharmaceutical incubators, to make the U.S. biotechnology supply chain more resilient and meet the public health and national security challenges of tomorrow. The PRBio Tech Hub seeks to drive regional growth in pharmaceuticals and medical products by attracting innovative biotechnology companies to the island.

The consortium's proposal includes workforce training, creating capital access programs to attract and retain biotech companies on the island, catalyzing the development of new drugs with the use of advanced manufacturing and enabling technologies; and building new state-of-the-art laboratory space and innovation centers that enable commercial product development of small and large molecule pharmaceuticals; viral, DNA and RNA

derived immunotherapies; and gene cell therapies.

Among the PRBio Tech Hub's achievements is the creation of the 30,000-square-foot, EDA-funded Forward Center to house incubation and acceleration capabilities for up to 60 technology-driven start-ups and early-stage companies across science, technology and manufacturing. The center was designed to serve small businesses, entrepreneurs and non-governmental organizations in several key sectors, including information technology, the aerospace industry, and development of medical devices, an industry that has experienced recent expansion on the island. Expansion into other critical industries like cybersecurity, and healthcare is anticipated.

The PRBio Tech Hub's status as a Designated Hub is a testament to Puerto Rico's legacy as a global leader in the FDA-regulated biotechnology sector and prominent bioscience hub, earning its reputation as the "Medicine Cabinet of the United States." 🌐



PHOTO: ADDBESTOCK/PRANIT

SAVE THE DATE

A scenic view of a beach at sunset. In the foreground, a paved walkway with a brick pattern runs along the left side. To the right of the walkway is a low concrete wall. Behind the wall, several tall palm trees are planted. A street lamp with three white globe lights stands near the wall. The beach is sandy and extends to the ocean. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds from the setting sun.

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U.S. TECH HUBS PROGRAM AWARDED 12 LOCATIONS

In July 2024, a funding round of approximately \$504 million in implementation grants to 12 tech hubs was announced by the Biden-Harris Administration, through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). This initiative is focused on advancing America's global leadership in critical technologies. President Biden announced the selection of 31 Tech Hubs Designees in October 2023. EDA has selected projects for funding in each of the 12 Hubs below, with award amounts to be finalized in the coming months.

Tech Hubs implementation awardees were:

Elevate Quantum Tech Hub **(Colorado, New Mexico)**

Lead Agency: Elevate Quantum

Technology Focus: Quantum information technology

Estimated Award Amount: \$41 million

Heartland BioWorks **(Indiana)**

Lead Agency: Applied Research Institute

Technology Focus: Biomanufacturing

Estimated Award Amount: \$51 million

Headwaters Hub **(Montana)**

Lead Agency: Accelerate Montana

Technology Focus: Smart photonic sensor systems

Estimated Award Amount: \$41 million

iFAB Tech Hub **(Illinois)**

Lead Agency: University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Technology Focus: Precision fermentation and biomanufacturing

Estimated Award Amount: \$51 million



Nevada Tech Hub (Nevada)

Lead Agency: University of Nevada, Reno

Technology Focus: Lithium batteries and electric vehicle materials

Estimated Award Amount: \$21 million

NY SMART I-Corridor Tech Hub (New York)

Lead Agency: CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity

Technology Focus: Semiconductor manufacturing

Estimated Award Amount: \$40 million

ReGen Valley Tech Hub (New Hampshire)

Lead Agency: Advanced Regenerative Manufacturing Institute

Technology Area: Biofabrication

Estimated Award Amount: \$44 million

SC Nexus for Advanced Resilient Energy (South Carolina, Georgia)

Lead Agency: South Carolina Department of Commerce

Technology Focus: Clean energy supply chain

Estimated Award Amount: \$45 million

South Florida ClimateReady Tech Hub (Florida)

Lead Agency: Miami Dade County Innovation and Economic Development Office

Technology Focus: Sustainable and climate-resilient infrastructure

Estimated Award Amount: \$19 million

Sustainable Polymers Tech Hub (Ohio)

Lead Agency: Greater Akron Chamber

Technology Focus: Sustainable polymers

Estimated Award Amount: \$51 million

Tulsa Hub for Equitable & Trustworthy Autonomy (Oklahoma)

Lead Agency: Tulsa Innovation Labs

Technology Focus: Secure autonomous systems

Estimated Award Amount: \$51 million

Wisconsin Biohealth Tech Hub (Wisconsin)

Lead Agency: BioForward Wisconsin

Technology Focus: Personalized medicine

Estimated Award Amount: \$49 million

The Tech Hubs Program was authorized by the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act, signed into law in August 2022. The statute authorized \$10 billion for the program over five years.

LOCATIONS FOR THE LOGISTICS INDUSTRY

(Continued from page 45)

that was recently honored as Washington State's 2023 Port of the Year. This recognition is a testament to the Port's commitment to quality operations, community investment, and sustainable energy. By choosing OVIP, companies aligning with a trusted partner who consistently invests in capital improvements to facilities and tenant support.

Visit www.PortofBremerton.org for more information.

LOUISVILLE'S NEW ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

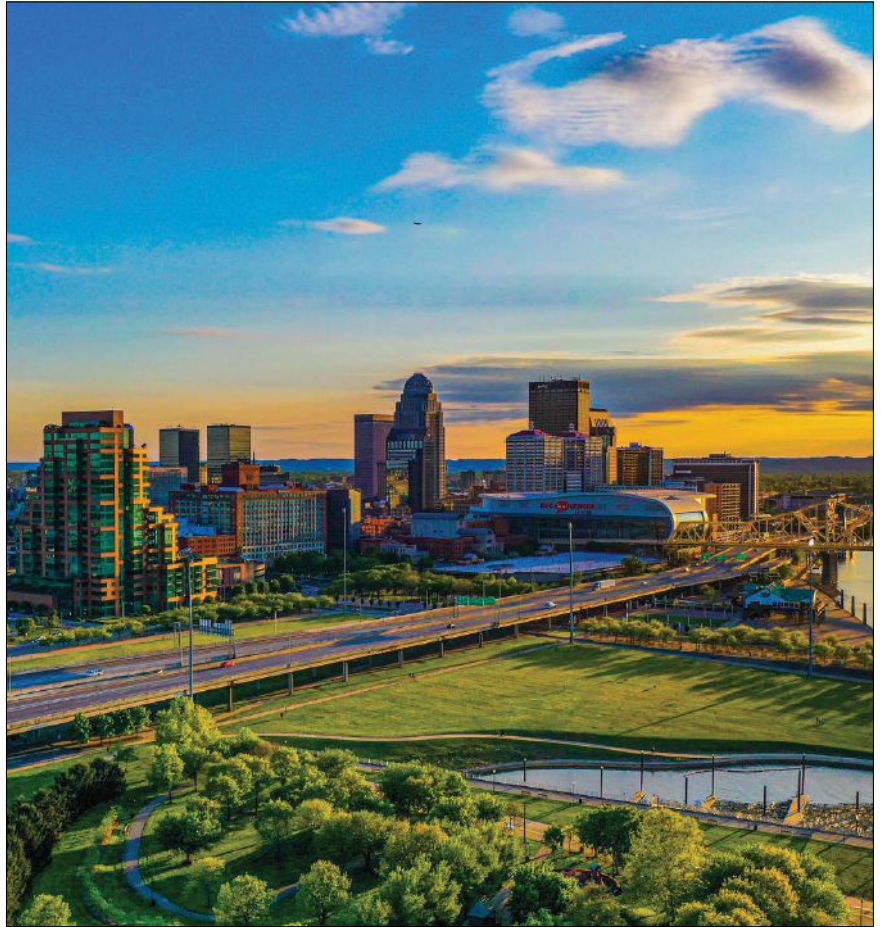
In July, Louisville proudly announced the creation of the Louisville Economic Development Alliance (LEDA), a dynamic public-private organization charged with spearheading business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts. LEDA aims to unite regional and utility partners around key areas such as talent development, finance and bonding, and entrepreneurship.

Interim CEO Pat Mulloy emphasized the organization's mission: "LEDA will be a more effective, customer-responsive organization with a long-term view of how to build our economy and our population."

He highlighted that LEDA staff bring extensive experience in assisting businesses of all sizes. Their expertise includes navigating government incentive programs, managing permitting processes, identifying real estate options, and connecting businesses with workforce training programs, higher education institutions, and other enterprises to address challenges and foster growth.

Although the lead economic development entity has changed, Louisville's unique competitive advantages remain steadfast:

Unparalleled Connectivity: Louisville boasts exceptional connectivity through its river, rail, road, and air networks, facilitating efficient transportation and logistics. From here, companies can move products to 80% of the world's population in less than 24 hours.



Skyline of Louisville, Kentucky

“Louisville boasts exceptional connectivity through its river, rail, road, and air networks.”

High-Quality Water Supply: Louisville has access to a reliable and abundant supply of high-quality water, essential for various industries, through the city-owned Louisville Water Company. Two of Louisville Water's treatment plants are ranked among the top 19 in North America.

Healthcare Hub: Louisville is home to a

robust presence of healthcare companies, with more than a dozen healthcare headquarters located here, making it one of the largest employer industries in the city.

Diverse Industries and Population: Louisville prides itself on its diversity, both in terms of industries and its people, fostering a vibrant and inclusive business environment. Louisville is home to the largest Cuban population in the U.S. outside of Florida and was one of the first city in the South to pass a LGBTQ+ Fairness Ordinance.

With LEDA at the helm, Louisville is poised to enhance its economic landscape, leveraging its enduring strengths to attract and support businesses, drive innovation, and ensure sustainable growth for the future.

Visit LouisvilleAlliance.org for more information. 

PHOTO: CITY OF LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY



A concept image of the Controlled Thermal Resources facility planned to recover 17 million metric tons of lithium from the "Lithium Valley."

(Continued from page 59)

development. These partnerships help create a supportive environment for businesses and foster innovation.

Maricopa's position as the fifth fastest growing city is a testament to its strategic planning, diverse economy, and commitment to creating a business-friendly environment. The city takes an entrepreneurial approach to business retention and development, ensuring it remains a vibrant place to live, work, and invest.

Visit www.maricopaoeo.com for more information.

GREATER YUMA REGION: THE GREEN TECH CORRIDOR

Located on the border of four states and two countries, the greater Yuma region has long been known as the nation's "winter salad bowl." Producing 90% of the country's winter leafy vegetables along with 180 additional crops has made it a title well earned. What most people don't know is that the region is also becoming a major producer of green energy and clean technology manufacturing. Its proximity to California and access to unique renewable resources has drawn the attention of hydrogen, lithium, cobalt, and solar manufacturers to the area.

Late in 2022, EVelocity Energy

announced its plans to build a solar-powered carbon neutral cobalt sulfate production facility in Yuma County. Representing a \$200 million investment, the facility will produce cobalt sulfate for EV batteries, a material crucial to America's initiative to electrify the U.S. automotive fleet and transition to a net-zero economy. EVelocity Energy's facility is expected to produce approximately 33,000 metric tons of EV battery grade cobalt sulfate per year, enough to support the domestic production of approximately 470,000 EVs each year.

"This is a big win for Yuma and our drive toward a more sustainable future," said Governor Katie Hobbs. "Arizonans working at this facility will advance our transition to a clean energy economy and bolster Arizona's reputation as a pioneer in a resilient and sustainable future."

In the same year, Plug Hydrogen with its partner BrightNight Solar started the permitting process to construct a 300MW solar farm that would power a 45 metric ton per day hydrogen plant in Yuma County.

"Yuma County is an area rich in solar energy resources along with a skilled workforce. It is ideally located to service Plug Power's customers with green hydrogen throughout the Southwest. By building our plant here, the economic

benefits of the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy will go to the people in Yuma County as it becomes a center for clean fuel production and technology," said Plug Hydrogen public relations. The project represents a \$750 million capital investment in facilities, private infrastructure and utilities within Yuma County.

Less than 45 minutes down the road, Yuma's neighbors in California are also transforming the green supply chain. Companies such as Controlled Thermal Resources, BHE Renewables, and Energy Source Minerals are preparing to recover 17 million metric tons of lithium from their mineral rich valley. The region has been coined as "Lithium Valley" and expects to revolutionize the generation, extraction, and processing of this critical raw material.

With over 1,500 MW of solar power generation and battery storage in Yuma County and another 1,200 MW slated for construction by 2026, the region has become a Green Tech Corridor connecting America to a more secure energy future while providing EV, semiconductors, and battery manufacturers with the valuable resources they need to power the green economy.

Visit www.greateryuma.org for more information. 🌱

Alabama

Building A Diverse Economy

COMPANIES ARE
FLOCKING TO THE
YELLOW HAMMER STATE
FOR LOCATION,
WORKFORCE,
AND MORE.

Alabama has seen significant improvements in economic development over the past year. Numerous businesses have either expanded their operations or moved their headquarters to the state due to its mild climate and pro-business environment.

Alabama has thriving industries due to the strong work ethic amongst the state's residents. The state has graduates from both universities and skills training programs. Alabama helps train their residents with programs such as AIDT, an innovative training program that provides services, solutions, and connections for new and expanding businesses and employees.

The AIDT program includes recruitment, assessment, training of employees, development of job-related training materials, training facilities, and the delivery of job specific services.

Alabama's geography and wide-open spaces have attracted businesses to move into the state. With the state's location in the South on the Gulf Coast, businesses have access to supplies,



Crews move launch adapter out of Marshall Space Flight Center for shipment to Kennedy Space Center.

materials, personnel, and products to transport across the country and world. Given the state's prime location, supplies, materials, and products enter and exit the state every day. Alabama consists of 6 interstates totaling 1,130 miles and 19 highways totaling 3,850 miles. The state also has 3,000 miles of rail and 25 rail companies, making shipping products easy for companies. Alabama's 6 major airports, 90 public airports, 6 commercial airlines, and 7 commuter airlines offer the aviation needs for companies to properly distribute their products to the rest of the world.

NASA USES ALABAMA MADE SPACE HARDWARE FOR NEXT LAUNCH

Alabama is at the forefront of the space industry. A piece of space flight hardware made at the Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, is being shipped to Kennedy Space Center in Florida for the first mission of NASA's Artemis program.

Marshall took control of the design and development of the rocket and received help from Boeing's Alabama workforce. In total, 106 companies in Alabama contributed to the rocket's development.

"Alabama space workers developed the landmark Saturn V rocket over a half century ago, and they're leading the way on the new SLS rocket that will take American astronauts back to the Moon," said Ellen McNair, Secretary of the Alabama Department of Commerce.

PHARMAVITE INVESTS \$12M TO EXPAND IN OPELIKA

Pharmavite will invest over \$12 million into their existing Opelika facility, improving operations. A leading manufacturer in vitamins, minerals, and gummies, Pharmavite first opened their Opelika facility in 2013 creating 280 jobs. Now with a total investment of \$170 million in multiple different expansions, the number of jobs is now over 600.

"We're thrilled to continue building on our commitment to Opelika through this investment, which will help improve Pharmavite's operations and further support our hundreds of employees in the area. For more than ten years, Pharmavite has remained committed to the vitality of the region and our efforts would not have been possible without the continued support from Mayor Fuller, the City Council, and the Opelika Economic Development team," stated Director of Plant Operations at the Opelika facility Solanda Prather.

Opelika Mayor Gary Fuller stated, "We are fortunate to have the world class partners like Pharmavite. They continue to provide good paying jobs to people in our community. They are a company built on strong values and beliefs. That's the kind of workplace we want in Opelika."

BUILDERS SUPPLY CO. INVESTS \$10.6M INTO DEKALB COUNTY

Builders Supply Co. will invest \$10.6 million into a new manufacturing facility in Fort Payne, creating 10 full-time jobs. The new manufacturing facility will be 23,000 square feet. Founded in 1959, Builders Supply is currently headquartered in Fort

Payne with locations in Scottsboro and Sylvania, catering to serve professional contractors and homeowners working on projects themselves.

"We are extremely proud to be multi-generational, family-owned/operated local business. We are excited to reinvest in the future of our employees, our families, and the communities in which we work and live," said Builders Supply President and

"Builders Supply Co. will invest \$10.6 million into a new manufacturing facility in Fort Payne, creating 10 full-time jobs."

Co-Owner George Weatherly.

"This is a giant step forward for Builders Supply. Not only are we excited about the growth potential that the new block manufacturing facility will provide to our company, but also the positive impact it will have on our community for many years to come," said the Builders Supply new Business Development Manager.

Builders Supply sells insulation, lumber, paint, windows closet supplies, tools, and other retail goods. The company also offers large commercial orders of items such as cement block and wooden pal-

lets. Construction of the new facility will be completed by May 2025.

ZEKELMAN TO INVEST \$6M INTO ALABAMA PROJECTS

Zekelman Industries will invest over \$6 million into the expansion of their steel tube production facility in Jefferson County, creating 91 jobs. \$2.3 million will go towards upgrading the manufacturing capabilities and production capacity at its existing Atlas Tube facility, creating 33 jobs. The other \$3.9 million will equip an existing warehouse to a new Wheatland Tube facility in Birmingham. There the warehouse will perform finishing processes on torque tubes produced by Atlas. This project will create 58 jobs.

"We're excited to continue our growth with the community of Birmingham and surrounding areas. We continue to meet with dynamic people as we build this team, and our local partners are helping us transform a warehouse into a steel tube production and fabrication facility. Together, we have built a factory where teammates can expand and grow their careers while supporting their families," said Zekelman Industries Executive Vice President and COO Tom Muth.

Once these projects are complete, the companies under Zekelman will work together to produce steel tubes for the solar industry. 🌞



Zekelman Industries to invest \$6 million into Jefferson County expansion.

Propelling Economic Growth

FLORIDA BUSINESSES
ARE ON THE MOVE,
WITH EMPLOYMENT
GROWTH AND
STATEWIDE INITIATIVES
DELIVERING RESULTS.



Space Florida, the state's aerospace economic development agency, operates Exploration Park located adjacent to Kennedy Space Center. Tenants include aerospace and commercial space companies.

Florida continues to be a model for the nation with data continuously pointing to economic stability and strength. Florida's unemployment rate was 2.8% in September 2023, marking 35 consecutive months below the national unemployment rate of 3.8% and 16 consecutive months as the lowest among the nation's 10 largest states. Florida's private sector employment grew by 2.5% (+214,500 jobs) over the year in September 2023, faster than the national rate of 2% over the same time period. Florida has outperformed the nation in over-the-year private sector job growth for 30 consecutive months in August 2023.

Florida has led the U.S. nation in new business formations for four consecutive years, with more than 2.6 million new businesses created in the state since 2019.

SPACE INDUSTRY ECOSYSTEM

Established in 2006, Space Florida is accelerating the growth of aerospace and aerospace-related industries across the

state through targeted business retention, expansion, and diversification efforts. As the state's aerospace finance and development authority, Space Florida provides business financing opportunities for the aerospace industry, manages infrastructure investment in the spaceport system, and facilitates research and development, workforce, education, and capital programs. In FY 2022-2023, Space Florida recruited, retained, and expanded 15 space and aerospace-related companies along with nearly 5,000 jobs across the state.

In July, Governor Ron DeSantis signed Senate Bill 968 into law, which designated Homestead Air Reserve Base and Tyndall Air Force Base as the two newest Florida spaceport territories. A spaceport territory is an aerospace hub that creates an ecosystem for companies. The designation enhances the use of the Space Florida toolkit, which includes the Florida Department of Transportation's Spaceport Improvement Program, enabling companies to access funding from this

program for development and infrastructure improvements.

Rob Long, President and CEO, Space Florida, said, "This legislative change, effective July 1, 2024, reflects our commitment to establishing Florida as the premier global and interplanetary capital for aerospace commerce. Through investment into these strategic locations, we will continue to bolster the aerospace ecosystem across the entire state of Florida by bringing companies together and providing access to essential resources, shared knowledge, and innovative ideas. We are excited about the opportunities this designation will bring and look forward to the continued growth and success of Florida's aerospace sector."

BY LAND AND BY SEA

For the second consecutive year, Florida's system of public seaports experienced record-high cargo growth, and set a new record-high number of cruise passenger embarkations, according to a January 2024 report from the Florida Seaport Transporta-

PHOTO: SPACE FLORIDA

tion and Economic Development Council.

For 2023, Florida's system of seaports handled 114.25 million tons of cargo, surpassing the 2022 record-high 112.5 million tons of cargo moved.

Florida's 16 public seaports have identified more than \$5 billion of investments through their Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) for the period beginning in 2024 and running through 2028. These investments will shore up dock rehabilitation, increase port capacity, support cargo container handling cranes, improve connectivity, and aim to relieve congestion.

In August, in support of Miami-Dade County Mayor Daniella Levine Cava's Climate Action Strategy and Future-Ready Economic Plan, PortMiami received a \$19.5 million grant from the Resilient Florida Program to construct a new, elevated

Berth 10 bulkhead system aimed at protecting existing uplands from flooding and potential damage caused by sea level rise.

RURAL LOCATIONS RECEIVING FUNDING

Meanwhile, Gov. DeSantis awarded funds for workforce development and infrastructure improvements through the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund (JGGF) and the Rural Infrastructure Fund (RIF). Recent awards were made to Citrus County, Cross City, and Cedar Key for projects that will complete critical infrastructure for those locations.

"Today's award will help to attract high-demand, high-wage jobs and businesses to the Nature Coast community," said the governor at the announcement. "This strategic investment will benefit the businesses,

job seekers, and local economies of Citrus County, Cross City, and Cedar Key."

"I'm grateful for Governor DeSantis' investment in these catalytic projects for Citrus, Dixie and Levy Counties," said Secretary of Commerce J. Alex Kelly. "The Governor's awarding of these funds will help elevate Citrus, Dixie, and Levy County leaders' vision for bringing high-wage, high-demand jobs to their communities."

Citrus County is one of the recipients to receive an award through the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund. Located on Florida's west coast 75 miles north of Tampa, Citrus County was awarded \$2.8 million for infrastructure improvements. The project will entail building a wastewater line that will serve Holder Industrial Park in the county, a 551-acre industrial park.

(Continued on page 109)

SET YOUR SIGHTS ON READY CUSTOMIZABLE SITES!



- **Acreage:** 80 customizable acres of commercial/industrial property—can be subdivided and could yield over 400,000 square feet of Class A industrial space.

- **Zoning and Land Use:** Zoned Industrial

- **Infrastructure:** 2 miles from Downtown Inverness and 1 mile off of US Hwy. 41 and State road 44. Direct access to Inverness Airport with future airside aviation space that is accessible by taxiway.

- **Surrounding Businesses:** Largest asset is the Inverness Airport (KINF) owned and maintained by the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners and operated by a Fixed Based Operator (FBO).

- **Site Renderings/3D Models:**

Visual representation of development possibilities

- **Environmental and Development Readiness:**

No existing Structures, Flood Zone AE/X, Sites are shovel ready

- **Proximity to Key Markets:**

Major cities in the vicinity are Tampa 75 miles, Orlando 73 miles and Gainesville 74 miles. CSX Intermodal is 72 miles, Port Tampa 78 miles and Orlando Airport 82 miles.



Contact: Steven Baham, CEcD, EDPF, Economic Development Director,
Phone: (352) 527-5487; Email: Steven.Baham@CitrusBOCC.com

For more info, visit BusinessFacilities.com/location-info

Workforce Programs On The Rise



Rendering of the American Pioneer 220, the high speed train to be manufactured in New York's Southern Tier region

ACROSS THE STATE OF
NEW YORK, RESOURCES
FOCUSED ON EXPANDING
THE TALENT PIPELINE
CONTINUE TO DEVELOP
AND DELIVER.

New York State is investing in people and places as well as in transformational technologies. From life-saving medical treatments to the latest in semiconductors, the state is focused on innovation. Its colleges, universities, and workforce development programs are training tomorrow's leaders. A growing green economy and revitalized downtowns are keeping New York in motion in the 21st century. All of this is supported by historic investments in infrastructure to connect goods and services with the world.

BRIGHTLINE WEST ARRIVES IN NEW YORK STATE

Brightline West and Siemens Mobility recently announced that Horseheads, NY will be the location of the first high-speed rail production facility in North America. With production expected to begin in 2026, the facility will make America's first high-speed trains—the American Pioneer 220—which will operate on Brightline West's Las Vegas to Southern California line. Horseheads is located in Chemung County in the Southern Tier region of the state.

PHOTO: SIEMENS MOBILITY

"Bringing high-speed rail to America is no longer a dream, but a reality. With [U.S. Senate] Leader [Chuck] Schumer, the Biden Administration, and Brightline's leadership we will transform the way Americans travel," said Marc Buncher, CEO Siemens Mobility North America at the announcement. "Continuing our more than four-decade legacy of building trains in America, the American Pioneer 220s will be American-Made in New York by a team of more than 300 skilled team members."

Said Michael Reininger, Brightline CEO, "For the first time ever in the U.S., we will be manufacturing trains that will compete with the best in the world. Reaching speeds of over 200 mph, these trains will be marked by the latest innovations designed for the modern traveler and establishing a new benchmark in transportation."

The manufacturing facility will create approximately 300 jobs.

Brightline selected Siemens Mobility to build trainsets for the Brightline West high-speed rail project that will connect Las Vegas and Southern California. The American Pioneer 220 will be the first true high-speed trainsets to be built in the U.S. The ultrawide, tube body concept, results in the most accessible high-speed rail vehicle on the market, exceeding ADA requirements.

WORKFORCE PROGRAM TO POWER BUSINESS

Workforce development will see a surge in New York State with Governor Kathy Hochul launching the One Network for Regional Advanced Manufacturing Partnerships (ON-RAMP) program, a \$200 million investment to help fund and realize a network of four new workforce development centers in high impact locations in Upstate New York. These centers will bring together industry, academia, social services, and community organizations to provide in-demand skills training and wraparound supports to provide people with the skills for high growth advanced manufac-



Governor Hochul delivered remarks at the Business Council of NYS Annual Meeting, during which she announced the launch of the ON-RAMP program that will create four workforce development centers.

turing industries, like semiconductors.

"New York's economic competitiveness is the result of our extraordinary workforce, striving every day to innovate, create and push the boundaries of what is possible," Governor Hochul said. "My ON-RAMP program marshals resources to our Upstate communities to catalyze investments in manufacturing—and it's already delivering for New Yorkers with tens of thousands of new jobs in the industries of the future coming right here to our state."

Empire State Development (ESD) President, CEO, and Commissioner Hope Knight said, "Under Governor Hochul's leadership, Empire State Development is making smart, high-impact investments designed to expand the opportunity economy to all New Yorkers. The innovative ON-RAMP program partners the needs of the growing industries that we are successfully attracting to New York with a workforce we are 'ramping up'—with skills and training—to be successful in the jobs of tomorrow."

ESD developed and will manage the program.

President and CEO of CenterState Robert Simpson said, "Governor Hochul understands that for our companies to be successful and communities to succeed, investments are needed to ensure advanced manufacturing jobs are accessible to more Central New Yorkers. The ON-RAMP program will bring job training for high-growth industries right

into our neighborhoods, meeting people where they are and ensuring that job creation translates into more equitable prosperity in our communities."

ON-RAMP will establish four new workforce development centers, including three chosen competitively, and a flagship location in Central New York, based in Syracuse.

Also supporting workforce growth is the opening of Hudson Valley Community College's (HVCC) STEM Education Center at the college's HVCC North Extension Center in Malta, Saratoga County. The facility, which is open to students for the 2024-25 academic year, is part of the college's \$17.5 million HVCC North expansion project and will serve more than 1,000 students annually with coursework applicable to over 30 associate degree and certificate programs.

Located in NYSEDA's Saratoga Technology and Energy Park (STEP®), the two-story, 14,500-square-foot building includes state-of-the-art labs for microbiology, anatomy and physiology, chemistry, and biology, as well as classrooms, student support space and offices. The project includes renovations to the college's Training and Education Center for Semiconductor Manufacturing and Alternative and Renewable Technologies (TEC-SMART). Together, the project provides new education and workforce training opportunities in the specialized and growing fields of healthcare, STEM, and skilled trades. 🔄

Virginia

At The Ready For Business



Located in Arlington, VA, the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport is one of the 65 public-use airports in the Commonwealth.

WITH SITE
DEVELOPMENT GAINING
MOMENTUM AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
TO SUPPORT,
THE COMMONWEALTH
IS LOOKING FORWARD.

Site development across Virginia is in motion, with the state having introduced a targeted effort in 2022. This past July, Governor Glenn Youngkin awarded a total of \$126 million in Virginia Business Ready Sites Program (VBRSP) development grants for 23 sites across the Commonwealth. Administered by the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP), this discretionary program partners with localities, utilities, and state agencies to fund infrastructure improvements that build operations-ready sites.

In addition to developing the project-ready sites, the VBRSP program assembles permits and approvals to make way for a smooth construction process. VBRSP identifies, assesses, and

improves industrial sites with at least 100 contiguous, developable acres, or 50 acres in the western part of the Commonwealth and in areas with other qualifying conditions.

"Speed to market is a major consideration in site selection decisions, and the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program has helped Virginia increase its inventory of suitable sites for major projects," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick at the July announcement. "This round of the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program will enhance 23 sites across the Commonwealth, ensuring all of Virginia is positioned to fully capture economic development and job creation opportunities for years to come."

Since the program's inception in 2022, 45 sites have received funding, and to date, 3,720 direct jobs have been announced on sites that have received VBRSP grants. In 20224, 23 sites representing more than 10,000 acres of developable land are receiving funding.

"Virginia has worked strategically to create a diverse portfolio of project-ready sites to meet company needs in a variety of target sectors, and these grants are a primary reason why Virginia is recognized as a national leader in site development," said Jason El Koubi, VEDP President and CEO. "I am incredibly proud of the results of the program's efforts. This investment in Virginia's infrastructure will continue to accelerate economic development in every region of the Commonwealth for years to come."

VBRSP was developed by a team of state, regional, and local partners including VEDP, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, railroad representatives, utility representatives, civil engineers, and other government, business, and industry representatives.

RICHMOND AIRPORT HANDLES RECORD CARGO

According to reported statistics, activities attributable to the Richmond International Airport (RIC) create nearly 16,000 jobs and contribute about \$2.1 billion in annual economic activity. Commercial activity at RIC reflects operations by Allegiant, American, Breeze, Delta, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit, Sun Country (seasonal), United and their regional airline affiliates, as well as cargo operations by Amazon, DHL, FedEx, and UPS.

Over the past two and a half years, an average of 16 million pounds of cargo has moved through RIC each month. The May 2024 data reporting 20.3 million pounds was the most cargo through the facility since at least January 2014. Since January 2022, cargo moving through the airport has increased an average of 1% per month.



Canon Virginia is expanding its manufacturing capacity at its site in Newport News.

CANON VIRGINIA EXPANDS, PLENTY UNLIMITED OPENS

Canon Virginia, Inc., the global manufacturer of consumer and office products, will expand its manufacturing facility in the City of Newport News. The expansion will support Canon's initiative to scale a method of isolating natural silk protein to create a solution with applications for multiple industries. Canon Virginia will retrain 30 employees to staff the new line, which is one of the company's first ventures outside their longstanding core business of image-related products.

"This announcement brings great opportunity for Canon Virginia to continue our commitment to innovation, growth and development in Virginia," said President & CEO of Canon Virginia, Inc. Shingo Shigeta.

"With this expansion, we will make silk protein a viable commercially scaled technology with broad application use in various segments," continued Shigeta. "Virginia's conducive business environment and the healthy business ecosystem has helped us achieve this goal—this is only possible through unwavering support from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Gov. Youngkin, VEDP, the City of Newport News, and the Hampton Roads Alliance."

Canon Virginia, Inc., a subsidiary of Japanese corporation Canon Inc., serves as the Canon manufacturing, engineering, recycling and technical support center for the Americas. Canon Virginia

produces products such as the new silk protein using advanced manufacturing methodologies while also serving as a factory service center providing customer service in the repair and refurbishment of Canon products. Canon Virginia's manufacturing services extend to injection mold making, contract manufacturing, medical contract manufacturing and aftermarket services.

VEDP worked with the City of Newport News to secure the project and will support Canon Virginia's retraining efforts through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program. Governor Glenn Youngkin also approved a performance-based grant of \$350,000 from the Virginia Investment Performance Grant, an incentive that encourages continued capital investment by existing Virginia companies.

In Chesterfield, VA, Plenty Unlimited chose a site in 2022 for its indoor vertical farming operation. This fall, the company opened the new facility slated to produce more than four million pounds of strawberries annually by growing vertically on towers that are 30 feet tall. This Greater Richmond operation is the world's first farm to grow indoor, vertically farmed berries at scale.

The Plenty Richmond Farm Campus is the largest indoor vertical farm campus in the world and a projected \$300 million investment that is planned to bring more than 300 total jobs to Virginia.

The first set of strawberries from the farm is expected to be available in early 2025. 🍓

REGIONAL FOCUS: NEW ENGLAND

(Continued from page 65)

ensure that Saco is well-positioned to serve the needs of its families for generations to come.

Beyond the classroom, recreational programs and beautiful natural surroundings, including beaches and a walkable downtown, contribute to a high quality of life. Explore the numerous recreational opportunities at www.sacomaine.org/explore.

The city of Saco balances history and innovation, relaxation and vibrancy, and offers a wealth of tools and resources for business.

Visit www.SacoMaine.org for more information.

CLAREMONT, NEW HAMPSHIRE: STRONG BUSINESS CLIMATE, HEALTHY GROWTH

With a population of 13,000, Claremont is a bustling former mill town located in the scenic Sugar River Region of the Upper Valley of New Hampshire. While many rural communities are facing the departure of hospitals and local medical care, Claremont is thrilled to be the location for a new and exciting medical facilities partnership and expansion.

Valley Regional Hospital (Valley Regional) officially joined the Dartmouth Health system on July 31, 2024. Dartmouth Health and Valley Regional have worked collaboratively for many years across multiple services, including cardiology, oncology, pathology, and radiology. This official affiliation builds upon the existing relationship and enables the formal integration of its clinical, administrative, and financial resources to sustain efficient, high-quality care for the rural communities served by Valley Regional and Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center, an existing Dartmouth Health member.

As the most rural academic medical system in the United States, Dartmouth Health offers the resources of the latest research and technology and the highest standards of care typically found in major metropolitan areas to the largely rural



Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont, New Hampshire is now part of the Dartmouth Health system.

population of the surrounding region, without the need to travel. Critical access and community hospitals that join Dartmouth Health gain all the benefits of academic medical affiliation. Residents of the greater Claremont area who receive their care through Valley Regional will reap these benefits of this affiliation, with the familiarity of a known and trusted community institution.

The agreement formally integrates Valley Regional with Dartmouth Health, providing the sharing of additional resources, such as improved access to state-of-the-art technology, the latest in clinical research, and more than 2,000 of the region's most distinguished physicians and providers. As a Dartmouth Health member hospital, Valley Regional's patients will experience improved access and expanded specialty care, including mental health, substance use treatment, and women's health.

"There is so much optimism and excitement as we look to our future together," said Joanne M. Conroy, MD, CEO and President of Dartmouth Health. "The benefit to our patients, families and rural communities will be substantial, including investments in future services and infrastructure and enhanced research

opportunities to continue providing the best in innovative, cutting-edge, world-class care. Dartmouth Health is woven into the fabric of the communities we serve, and now Claremont and its surrounding communities will formally be a part of that fabric. We couldn't be more excited about Valley Regional Hospital becoming a member of Dartmouth Health."

Valley Regional Hospital plans to build a new medical office building across the street from the hospital on existing property. The proposed plan is approximately 25,000 square feet and includes a total of 32 exam rooms to accommodate primary care, orthopedics, pediatrics, and behavioral health/social work services. In addition, the outpatient clinic will have an x-ray suite with space for phlebotomy and point-of-care testing. Valley Regional expects to start construction in the Spring of 2025.

The City of Claremont Department of Planning and Development is the resource to explore business opportunities. From startup and existing businesses as well as those looking to expand into the area, discover the possibilities.

Visit www.ClaremontNH.com/advantage/ for more information. 

PHOTO: CITY OF CLAREMONT

(Continued from page 103)

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE MOVES

In Jacksonville, autonomous vehicle manufacturer, HOLON, is building its first production plant for its fully-electric, autonomous movers in Jacksonville. The German-based company is a subsidiary of global automotive supplier BENTELER Group, and the reportedly \$100 million investment will be Florida's first automotive vehicle manufacturing operation. The approximately 500,000-square-foot facility is expected to complete in 2026.

HOLON's mover will be made available in the U.S. through Benteler Mobility in collaboration with Beep, Inc., a provider of autonomous shared mobility solutions. Benteler Mobility will offer services for the purchase and implementation of the vehicles, while Beep, an

Orlando-based company, will provide the services and software to deploy, manage and operate the vehicles.

Said Jacksonville Mayor Donna Deegan, "[This project] complements the Jacksonville Transportation Authority's innovative work in this space and the University of Florida's downtown campus that will offer artificial intelligence degrees in the future."

"Manufacturing has been the missing piece," JAXUSA Partnership President Aundra Wallace said. "JTA is a national leader with autonomous vehicles and has built strategic partnerships across the industry. HOLON's investment brings the production element to a robust innovation ecosystem in place, and we expect only growth from here on out." 🍷



Set to be manufactured in Jacksonville, Florida, the HOLON mover is a fully-electric, autonomous vehicle.

IMAGE: HOLON

LOCATIONS FOR THE ELECTRIC VEHICLES/SUPPLIERS INDUSTRY

(Continued from page 49)

segment, and one of the best-customized training programs in the country to upskill workers from other industries.

♦ **Incentives:** Sales and use tax rebates specific to equipment purchases related to lithium recovery, a temporary 80% property tax break for up to 10 years for manufacturers, and performance-based financial awards for companies that create full-time jobs for Louisiana residents.

With its central Louisiana facility, Australian mining company Syrah is among the state's pioneers of battery component production. Having built the first commercial-scale natural graphite active anode material (AAM) plant outside of China, the company began production of the essential lithium-ion battery component in February 2024. The plant is already making an impact, supplying Tesla with 8kt of AAM each year.

That was just the start of Louisiana's EV wave. Since 2021, Louisiana Economic Development (LED) has announced seven major EV battery supply chain-related projects with combined capital investment of more than \$2.3 billion. Joining Syrah are

CapChem USA, Element 25, ElementUS, Koura Global, UBE Corporation, and Ucore.

The battery material supply chain is another example of how Louisiana is expanding what it means to be an "energy state." It continues to support legacy energy while encouraging investment in what LED Secretary Susan Bonnett Bourgeois refers to as "the energy addition."

"Every time a major corporation

chooses to do business here, it is a vote of confidence from the global marketplace in Louisiana's strategic location, rich natural resources, and workforce, which are second to none," said Secretary Bourgeois. "If you do the hard work of launching your company here, we're going to help you succeed."

Visit www.OpportunityLouisiana.gov to learn more. 🍷



Australian mining company Syrah Resources produces lithium-ion battery components for Tesla from its northeast Louisiana facility.

PHOTO: SYRAH RESOURCES

The *LAST* WORD

with **Jamie Newell**, *Strategic Development Consultant at EastwardH2, a location advisory services firm focused on the emerging hydrogen industry.*



HYDROGEN PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE TOWARDS DECARBONIZATION EFFORTS AS COMPANIES TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SYSTEMS.

Hydrogen is rapidly establishing itself as a new emerging market in the U.S. and a key commodity in the global marketplace due to the increasing emphasis on decarbonization and expansion of clean energy initiatives involving the reduction of greenhouse gases. At a geopolitical level, many countries are actively working to replace their reliance on liquefied natural gas (LNG) with hydrogen as part of a broader strategy to transition to cleaner renewable energy sources.

Germany has ramped up hydrogen generation projects after viewing hydrogen as a key solution for energy security, especially after facing disruptions in LNG supplies due to the Russo-Ukrainian war and the U.S. pause on LNG exports stemming from the examination of domestic needs and shifting energy policies. Australia is also working to position itself as a significant player in the global hydrogen market, with ambitious plans to become a major exporter of green hydrogen, announcing numerous projects across the globe, where federal funding initiatives are driving the progress.

Some significant announcements contributing to the development of the hydrogen economy that have been made domestically within the past year have included Plastics Omnium's hydrogen storage plant and Nel's electrolyzer plant in Michigan, as well as Topsoe's electrolyzer plant in Virginia. Additionally, Wood-

side Energy revealed plans for hydrogen generation in Oklahoma, Fortescue announced a hydrogen operation in Arizona, and DG Fuels recently announced a project in Nebraska, which also integrates hydrogen into sustainable aviation fuel.

Hydrogen has already played an existing role as an essential component across multiple industries that are driving increased interest and investment into clean energy technologies. These sectors include chemical production, refining, steel and cement manufacturing, electronics, glassmaking, food processing, aerospace, metal processing, and even pharmaceuticals. While these industries contribute to the early adoption of hydrogen as a feedstock in industrial applications, they also pave the way for its eventual use in passenger vehicles once the supporting infrastructure for fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs) is fully developed.

There are many ways to generate hydrogen, but the most common production methods are Steam Methane Reformation (SMR) and Electrolysis. SMR produces blue hydrogen using natural gas as a feedstock and involves Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage (CCUS) while electrolysis produces green hydrogen from demineralized water and power from a renewable source such as wind, solar, hydropower, or biomass. The difference between the two is their carbon intensity score. Green hydrogen is

the most environmentally friendly option with the lowest carbon intensity score and is commonly referred to as the "clean hydrogen," while blue hydrogen provides a lower-carbon alternative to conventional hydrogen but still has a higher carbon intensity compared to green.

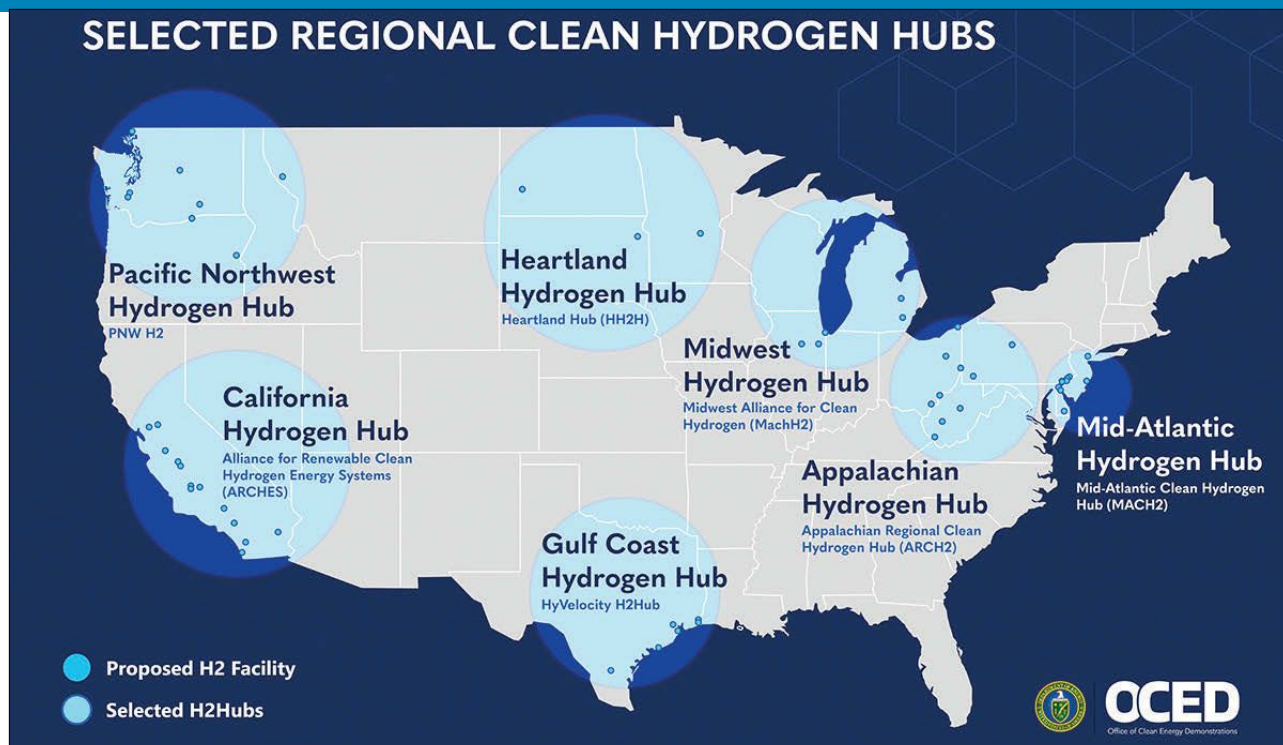
There are also two different forms of hydrogen that consist of gaseous or liquified. Gaseous hydrogen is used primarily in fuel cells, industrial processes, and power generation where it can be delivered and stored relatively easily in this form. Liquified hydrogen is employed in applications requiring high-density storage and transport, such as long-distance shipping, locomotives, space exploration, and large-scale energy storage. Its compact form makes it ideal for these purposes where space and volume efficiency are critical.

BUILDING U.S. HYDROGEN HUBS

The U.S. Department of Energy has established seven hydrogen hubs nationwide to allocate funding for hydrogen initiatives, with California's ARCHES hub laying the foundation for public transportation, heavy duty trucking, and port operations. Activity in the hydrogen sector is also extending across various other states, predominantly those with newly introduced tax incentives that support clean energy projects. As hydrogen generation projects advance into the site

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LOCATION	PAGE #	LOCATION	PAGE #	LOCATION	PAGE #
ALABAMA		KANSAS		NORTH CAROLINA	
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE www.madeinalabama.com	47	GO TOPEKA www.gotopeka.com	35	ECONOMIC DEV. PARTNERSHIP OF NC www.edpnc.com	17
ARIZONA		KENTUCKY		OHIO	
ARIZONA COMMERCE AUTHORITY www.azcommerce.com	55	LOUISVILLE METRO DEPT. OF ECON. DEV www.louisvilleky.gov/	42	MARION CAN DO www.marioncando.com	51
CITY OF MARICOPA OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY www.maricopaoeo.com	9	LOUISIANA		ONE COLUMBUS www.columbusregion.com	5
CITY OF SIERRA VISTA www.sierravistaaz.gov	57	LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT www.opportunitylouisiana.gov	7	PENNSYLVANIA	
CITY OF TUCSON www.tucsonaz.gov	59	SOUTHWEST LOUISIANA ECONOMIC DEV. ALLIANCE www.chooseswlouisiana.com	C4	HORSHAM TOWNSHIP www.horsham.org	77
CITY OF WINSLOW www.winslowaz.gov	58	MAINE		TEXAS	
GREATER YUMA ECON. DEV. CORP. www.greateryuma.org	56	CITY OF BANGOR www.bangormaine.gov	63	CITY OF HUNTSVILLE ECON. DEV www.HuntsvilleTXed.com	25
ARKANSAS		CITY OF SACO www.sacomaine.org	64	LUBBOCK ECONOMIC DEV. ALLIANCE www.lubbockeda.org	69
ARKANSAS ECON. DEV. COMMISSION www.arkansasedc.com	21	MARYLAND		MARBLE FALLS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP. www.marblefallsedc.com	67
CONNECTICUT		FREDERICK COUNTY OFFICE OF ECON. DEV. www.discoverfrederickmd.com	87	ODESSA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION www.odessatex.com	71
ADVANCECT www.advancect.org	61	MONTGOMERY COUNTY ECON. DEV. CORP. https://thinkmoco.com	85	PORT SAN ANTONIO www.portsanantonio.us	23
FLORIDA		MICHIGAN		TOMBALL ECONOMIC DEV. CORP. www.tomballtxedc.org	73
CITRUS COUNTY www.citrusbocc.com	103	MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP. www.michiganbusiness.org	C2-1	UTAH	
PORT OF MIAMI www.miamidade.gov/portmiami	43	NEW HAMPSHIRE		LAYTON CITY www.laytoncity.org	79
ILLINOIS		CITY OF CLAREMONT www.claremonthn.com/economic-development	65	VIRGINIA	
CITY OF WOOD DALE www.wooddale.com	29	NEW JERSEY		VIRGINIA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP www.vedp.org	14-15
SOUTHERN ILLINOIS NOW www.southernillinoisnow.org	45	BEDMINSTER TECHNOLOGY CENTER www.bedminstertechcenter.com	33	WASHINGTON	
VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS www.vah.com	31	CHOOSE NEW JERSEY www.thisisnewjersey.com	19	PORT OF BREMERTON www.portofbremerton.org	44
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		THINK DUTCHESS ALLIANCE FOR BUSINESS www.thinkdutchess.com	39	WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP. www.wedc.org	3
		NEVADA			
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Source: U.S. Department of Energy; energy.gov

selection stage, many states and local communities are focusing on strategies to attract and support these developments, with some relying heavily on hub directors for guidance, while others are trying to understand where to begin.

Hydrogen projects often begin by establishing a partnership between a hydrogen production operation and a user of hydrogen, commonly referred to as the “offtaker.” Therefore, it is instrumental for states and communities to work directly with their manufacturing alliances in creating a platform for education and awareness of the many uses of hydrogen for industry, particularly the high heat industrial users. The biggest problem we face in the rapidly growing hydrogen economy is that many developers can produce hydrogen at a reasonable cost to take to market but have difficulty matching their supply to the actual demand. The states that are driving hydrogen projects to specific sites must understand the site conditions and opportunities for the type of hydrogen being generated and be able to identify offtakers located within

the proximity of these sites as they play matchmaker during the recruitment stage of these projects.

Data center developers are also exploring the use of hydrogen in microgrids for many key reasons related to overall energy reliability, sustainability, and operational efficiency. With AI supercomputers on the rise that utilize three times the physical footprint of the infrastructure needed for managing the daily volume of Google searches, the development of localized microgrids surrounding data center campuses becomes even more vital to the success of these operations. Hydrogen plays a versatile role in microgrid projects, which also seek to achieve grid independence, as it offers benefits that range from power generation to energy storage while mitigating the issue of curtailment from other renewable energy systems.

While the hype surrounds Section 45V and 45Q of the Inflation Reduction Act, as these tax credits provide financial incentives directly related to the production and utilization of hydrogen and carbon capture, Section 48C also

plays a significant role in promoting the use of hydrogen to industries involved. Supporting production and infrastructure development, the 48C tax credits can provide substantial amounts towards the purchase, construction, and installation of equipment used in hydrogen generation, storage, and distribution, while also contributing to the reduction of upfront capital costs for companies investing in these technologies.

Lastly, as we await the results from the upcoming U.S. election that may ultimately determine the progression of green energy projects and where the capital investments in hydrogen will continue to deploy, one fact remains: Hydrogen is the future. 

Newell is a Strategic Development Consultant with Eastward H2 (www.eastwardh2.com) based in rural North Carolina, providing location advisory services for hydrogen generation systems companies and other component part manufacturers involved in energy projects across the sustainability sector.

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Southwest Louisiana boasts a thriving and diverse economy with numerous opportunities across various sectors such as energy, manufacturing, healthcare, and tourism.

The area benefits from robust gulf coast transportation and logistics networks—including the Port of Lake Charles and Chennault International Airport which touts a 10,000+ foot runway—facilitating easy access to domestic and international markets.



SWLA is home to a skilled and educated workforce, supported by excellent educational institutions and vocational training programs such as SOWELA Technical Community College and McNeese State University.

The region offers a business-friendly environment, characterized by low taxes, favorable regulations, and a supportive network of organizations and government entities that provide resources, guidance, and incentives to entrepreneurs.

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